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**A NEW PILGRIMAGE.**



# A NEW PILGRIMAGE,

AND OTHER POEMS,

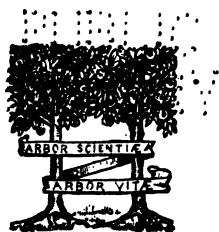
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BY

WILFRID SCAWEN BLUNT, *esq.*

AUTHOR OF "THE LOVE SONNETS OF PROTEUS," "THE WIND  
AND THE WHIRLWIND," "IN VINCULIS,"

ETC., ETC.



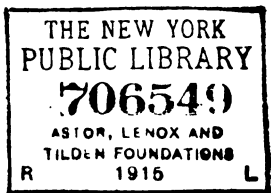
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## PREFACE.

The poems contained in the present volume belong in part to the Author's literary period of "Proteus", in part to more recent times; nor will the reader find difficulty in distinguishing between them. All that needs explaining is that the series of Sonnets giving their name to the book were written in the winter of 1886-1887; and the Pastorals, which end it, in the past and present years.

So much for the psychology of the volume. With regard to its manner the author would speak more at length.

"Sed nos qui vivimus" and the pieces "from the Arabic" represent an attempt

made in all diffidence to deal with the difficult problem of assonance, a form of ending which has never been seriously tried in English metres, but which in the author's opinion deserves better attention. Complete success in assonance would doubtless be to produce the illusion of rhyme, or at least to leave the ear satisfied with a half result, as it is (but how rarely!) with the no result of blank verse. For this we in England need education, and the author is not sanguine as to the judgment which will be passed upon his skill. As a suggestion, however, he believes his attempt will be one day considered valuable, and he commends it now to the notice of critics.

Another and more important point which he raises and endeavours to meet, is with regard to the construction of the English sonnet. Our critics seem to have decided

that no form of sonnet is admissible in English other than the Petrarchan, or, at least, that some precedent must be shown in early Italian literature for each variation from it. Against this assumption of finality on a foreign model the author ventures to protest on the double ground that the genius and scope of English rhyme is essentially different from that of the Italian,—and that for the treatment of modern subjects (the only ones, perhaps, of permanent value in any literature) the Italian form lacks elasticity, and so is not the practically best. In the matter of rhyme, its greater redundancy and license in the Italian places the English imitator at a clear disadvantage. The Italian doubleendings, so effective in adding strength, are more difficult with us, and, being so, can only be used sparingly without offence to our ears. Deprived of them the ordinary model

of the Italian sextett becomes poor and monotonous, for it needs a very strong single rhyme to be recognized at its full value after the usual Petrarchan interval. Of course, the author does not assert that these difficulties have not been successfully met by our best English poets. Milton, Wordsworth, Mrs. Browning, Rossetti, are proofs to the contrary. Yet, when you have mentioned these names, there are probably not a hundred English sonnets in strict Petrarchan measure which are not intolerably dull. This surely should not be. How much stronger too becomes our case when modern subjects are approached. Tennyson, the greatest of our living poets, and the most modern in his treatment, gives us hardly a specimen on contemporary subjects of his skill. Browning, William Morris, Longfellow, Lowell are almost equally silent ; Lord Lytton and

Alfred Austin give us a few good ones, and Matthew Arnold has left us a bare half-dozen. Yet why? The sonnet, with the Italian writers of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, was the vehicle of their daily thoughts about their daily affairs, as well as that of their profoundest utterances in religion, love and politics; nor is there any reason beyond the trammels of convention why it should not be so yet with us. It seems to the author that our critics, like the Scribes and Pharisees of the New Testament, are placing on our shoulders a burden heavier than we English poets can bear. By insisting on the mint and cummin of certain rhymes and endings, they have set at nought the intellectual law on which the sonnet rests, and made it of no practical avail.

For this reason the author makes bold in

the present volume to present the reader with two forms in which he conceives the modern English sonnet may be written, violating no law of the Italians essential to modern poetry, and yet with sufficient elbow room to make it a vehicle suited to every subject and every mood of feeling. The first is a metre of fourteen lines—that of the “New Pilgrimage,”—the second a metre of sixteen, for lighter themes, illustrated in the “Idler’s Calendar.”

It will be observed that both these examples follow the same metrical idea. The usual Petrarchan form of the octave, A B B A A B B A, is rejected in favour of the alternative Italian form A B A B B A B A, which to the author’s ear is lighter and more varied, the reversing of the rhyme in the second half of the octave giving it a special bril-

liancy which the other lacks. The author, though he sometimes violates the rule in practice, considers a cæsura at the end of the eighth line, or occasionally deferred to the middle of the ninth, essential to a good sonnet ; and he would include such a cæsura as one of the most important features of his metre. It will also be observed that he allows the exception of a third rhyme in the sixth and eighth lines. He is far from saying that the octave is not more perfect without it, but he has found by experience that many a good sonnet cannot be written except with this indulgence. Next to the last, the first line of every sonnet is of the most importance, and yet there are admirable first lines which by no ingenuity can be provided with three others in rhyme. The sense, therefore, has to be sacrificed, or the line is lost.



With regard to the sextett in the shorter formula, and the second octave in the longer, the author is very distinctly of opinion that a couplet is in English the strongest and most effective form of ending. He believes the weakness of ninety-nine of our sonnets out of a hundred (and that is about the proportion of those annually published) comes from the poverty of the Petrarchan sextett in English, the formula A B C A B C, unaided by double rhymes. Certainly, in lighter subjects the couplet is of the greatest possible use, pointing, and sometimes even suggesting, the epigram which is the sonnet's moral. The author, therefore, adheres to the couplet as the English sonnet writer's most precious inheritance from the greatest of all our sonneteers and poets. Where Shakespeare rejected the Italian sextett in its favour, we moderns surely may stand excused.

After all, the sonnet's "intellectual measure" is the truly important matter. On this the author holds briefly that the sonnet, to be a good one, should contain one conspicuous thought, and only one ; that the first line should foreshadow this, as a musical overture does an opera ; that the octave should supply variations on the suggested theme, images, metaphors, developments ; that the third quartett should fill in and complete the outline, and finally, that the couplet should point the moral. He gives the following as a metrical description of his idea of a perfect English sonnet :—

## A PERFECT SONNET.

Oh, for a perfect sonnet of all time !

Wild music, heralding immortal hopes,  
Strikes the bold prelude. To it from each clime,  
Like tropic birds on some green island slopes,  
Thoughts answering come, high metaphors, brave  
tropes,

In ordered measure and majestic rhyme.

And, presently, all hearts, of kings and popes,  
And peoples, throb to this new theme sublime.

Anon 'tis reason speaks. A note of death

Strengthens the symphony yet fraught with pain,  
And men seek meanings with abated breath,

Vexing their souls,—till lo, once more, the strain  
Breaks through triumphant, and Love's master voice  
Thrills the last phrase and bids all joy rejoice.

CRABBET PARK, SUSSEX.

*August 17, 1889.*

W. S. B.

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# A NEW PILGRIMAGE.

**B**

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## A NEW PILGRIMAGE.

### I.

Care killed a cat, and I have cares at home,  
Which vex me nightly and disturb my bed.  
The things I love have all grown wearisome ;  
The things that loved me are estranged or dead.  
I have a house most fair, but tenanted  
With shadows only, gardens of tall trees,  
Fenced in and made secure from every dread  
But this one terror, my soul's lack of ease.  
I have much wealth of pleasure, horse and hound  
Woods broad for sport, and fields that are my  
own,  
With neighbours of good cheer to greet me round,  
And servants tried by whom my will is done.  
Here all things live at peace in this dear place,  
All but my pride, which goes companionless.



## II.

How shall I ransom me ? The world without,  
Where once I lived in vain expense and noise,  
Say, shall it welcome me in this last rout,  
Back to its bosom of forgotten joys ?  
Sometimes I hear it whispering with strange  
voice,  
Asking, " Are we forever then cast out,  
The things that helped thee once in thy annoys,  
That thou despairest ? Nay, away with doubt !  
Take courage to thy heart to heal its woes. .  
It still shall beat as wildly as a boy's." .  
This tempts me in the night-time, and I loose  
My soul to dalliance with youth's broken toys.  
Ay, wherefore suffer ? In this question lies  
More than my soul can answer, and be wise.

III.

I will break through my bondage. Let me be  
Homeless once more, a wanderer on the earth,  
Marked with my soul's sole care for company,  
Like Cain, lest I do murder on my hearth.  
I ask not others' goods—nor wealth nor worth,  
Nor the world's kindness, which should comfort me,  
But to forget the story of my birth,  
And go forth naked of all name, but free.  
Where the flowers blow, there let me sit and  
dream.  
Where the rain falls, ah ! leave my tears their  
way.  
Where men laugh loud, I too will join the hymn,  
And in God's congregation let me pray.  
Only alone—I ask this thing—alone,  
Where none may know me, or have ever known.

## IV.

Behold the deed is done. Here endeth all  
That bound my grief to its ancestral ways.  
I have passed out, as from a funeral,  
From my dead home, and in the great world's  
gaze  
Henceforth I stand, a pilgrim of new days,  
On the high road of life. Where I was thrall,  
See, I am master, being passionless ;  
And, having nothing now, am lord of all.  
How glorious is the world ! Its infinite grace  
Surprises me—and not as erst with fear,—  
But as one meets a woman face to face,  
Loved once and unforgotten and still dear  
In certain moods and seasons,—so to me  
The fair world smiles to-day, yet leaves me free.

**v.**

The physical world itself is a fair thing  
For who has eyes to see or ears to hear.  
To-day I fled on my new freedom's wing,  
With the first swallows of the parting year,  
Southwards from England. At the Folkestone  
pier  
I left the burden of my sins behind,  
Noting how gay the noon was, and how clear  
The tide's fresh laughter rising to no wind.  
A hundred souls of men there with my own  
Smiled in that sunshine. 'Tis a little measure  
Makes glad the heart at sea, and not alone  
Do wise men kindle to its pulse of pleasure.  
Here all alike, peers, pedlars, squires, and dames  
Foreswore their griefs fog-born of Father Thames.

## VI.

Away from sorrow ! Yes, indeed, away !

Who said that care behind the horseman sits ?  
The train to Paris, as it flies to-day,

Whirls its bold rider clear of ague fits.

Who stops for sorrows—who for his lost wits—  
His vanished gold—his loves of yesterday—

His vexed ambitions ? See, the landscape flits  
Bright in his face, and fleetier far than they.

Away ! away ! Our mother Earth is wide—

And our poor lives and loves of what avail ?  
All life is here—and here we sit astride

On her broad back, with Hope's white wings  
for sail,

In search of fortune and that glorious goal,  
Paris, the golden city of our soul.

VII.

Ah, Paris, Paris ! What an echo rings  
Still in those syllables of vain delight !  
What voice of what dead pleasures on what wings  
Of Moenad laughters pulsing through the night !  
How bravely her streets smile on me—how  
bright  
Her shops, her houses, fair sepulchral things,  
Stored with the sins of men forgotten quite,  
The loves of mountebanks, the lusts of kings !  
What message has she to me on this day  
Of my new life ? Shall I, a pilgrim wan,  
Sit at her board and revel at her play,  
As in the days of old ? Nay, this is done.  
It cannot be ; and yet I love her well  
With her broad roads and pleasant paths to hell.

## VIII.

I will sit down awhile in dalliance

With my dead life, and dream that it is young.

My earliest memories have their home in France,

The chestnut woods of Bearn and streams among,

Where first I learned to stammer the French  
tongue.

Fair ancient France. No railroad insolence

Had mixed her peoples then, and still men clung

Each to his ways, and viewed the world askance.

We, too, as exiles from our northern shore,

Surveyed things sparsely ; and my own child's  
scorn

Remained, how long, a rebel to all lore

Save its lost English, nor was quite o'erborne

Till, as I swore I'd speak no French frog's word,

I swore in French, and so laid down my sword.

IX.

These were in truth brave days. From our high  
perch,

The box-seat of our travelling chariot, then  
We children spied the world 'twas ours to search,  
And mocked like birds at manners and at men.

What wonders we beheld, Havre, Rouen, Caen,  
The Norman caps, the Breton crowds in church,  
The loyal Loire, the valorous Vendéen,  
And all the Revolution left in lurch  
That very year—things old as Waterloo.—

But when we neared the mountains crowned  
with snows,  
And heard the torrents roar, our wonder grew  
Over our wit, and a new pleasure rose  
Wild in our hearts, and stopped our tongues with  
dread,  
The sense of death and beauty overhead.



## X.

Whence is our pleasure in things beautiful ?

We are not born with it, we do not know,  
By instinct of the eye or natural rule,

That naked rocks are fairest, or flowers blow  
Best in their clefts, or that the world of snow  
Has other glory than of cold and ice.

From our mother's hand we viewed these things  
below,

Senseless as goats which browse a precipice,  
Till we were taught to know them. With what  
tears

I con the lessons now I learned so well,  
Of mountain shapes, from those dead lips of hers ;  
And as she spoke, behold, a miracle  
Proving her words,—for at our feet there grew,  
Beauty's last prodigy, a gentian blue.

XI.

I have it still, a book with pages sewn  
Cross-wise in silk, and brimming with these  
    flowers,  
Treasures we gathered there, long sere and brown,  
    The ghosts of childhood's first undoubting hours,  
    Of childhood in the mountains e'er the powers  
Of wrong and pain had turned our joys to gall.  
    That summer stands to me a tower of towers,  
To which my gladness clings in spite of all.  
There was one special wonder in the hills,  
    A place where nets were hung from tree to tree  
For flights of pigeons. This beyond all else  
    Touched my boy's fancy for its mystery,  
And for the men who, caged aloft on poles,  
Scared down the birds, as Satan scares men's  
    souls.

## XII.

Dear royal France ! I fix the happy year  
At forty-six, because that Christmas-tide  
There passed through Pau the Duke of Mont-  
pensier,  
Fresh from his nuptials with his Spanish bride ;  
And because I, unwilling, shared their pride,  
As youngest of the English children there,  
By offering flowers to the fair glorified  
Daughter of Bourbon standing on the stair—  
A point in history. When we came at last  
To this gay Paris I was doomed to love,  
There were already rumours of the blast  
That swept the Orleans songsters from their grove  
In flight to London, after Polignac  
And the true king, at their King Bourgeois' back.

XIII.

And what strange sights have these three windows  
seen,

Mid bonnes and children, in the Tuileries !  
What flights of hero, Emperor and Queen,  
Since first I looked down from them, one of  
these !

Here, with his Mornys and his Persignys,  
Louis Napoleon, the Prince President,  
Rode one December past us, on the breeze  
Of his new glory, bloodstained and intent.  
Later, I too my love's diplomacies  
Played at Eugenia's court,—blest Empress !

Then  
How did men curse her with their Marseillaise,  
When the foe's horse was watered in her Seine,  
And the flames, lit for her last festival,  
Licked out her palace and its glories all.

## XIV.

To-day there is no cloud upon thy face,  
Paris, fair city of romance and doom !  
Thy memories do not grieve thee, and no trace  
Lives of their tears for us who after come.  
All is forgotten—thy high martyrdom,  
Thy rage, thy vows, thy vauntings, thy disgrace,  
With those who died for thee to beat of drum,  
And those who lived to see thee kingdomless.  
Indeed thou art a woman in thy mirths,  
A woman in thy griefs which leave thee young,  
A prudent virgin still, despite the births  
Of these sad prodigies thy bards have sung.  
What to thy whoredoms is a vanished throne ?  
A chair where a fool sat, and he is gone !

XV.

For thus it is. You flout at kings to-day.

To-morrow in your pride you shall stoop low  
To a new tyrant who shall come your way,  
And serve him meekly with mock serious brow,  
While the world laughs. I shall not laugh at  
you.

Your Bourbon, Bonaparte or Boulanger

Are foils to your own part of "ingenue"

Which moves me most, the moral of your play.

You have a mission in the world, to teach

All pride its level. Poet, prince and clown,

Each in your amorous arms has scaled the breach

Of his own pleasure and the world's renown.

Till with a yawn you turn, and from your bed

Kick out your hero with his ass's head.

## XVI.

Gods, what a moral ! Yet in vain I jest.

The France which has been, and shall be again,

Is the most serious, and perhaps the best,

Of all the nations which have power with men.

France, only of the nations, has this plain

Thought in the world, to scorn hypocrisy ;

And by this token she shall purge the stain

Of her sins yet, though these as scarlet be.

Let her put off her folly ! 'Tis a cloak

Which hides her virtue. Let her foremost stand,

The champion of all necks which feel the yoke,

As once she stood sublime in every land.

Let her forego her Tonquins, and make good

Her boast to man of man's high brotherhood.—

**XVII.**

For lo ! the nations, the imperial nations  
Of Europe, all imagine a vain thing,  
Sitting thus blindly in their generations,  
Serving an idol for their God and King.  
Blindly they rage together, worshipping  
Their lusts of cunning, and their lusts of gold ;  
Trampling the hearts of all too weak to bring  
Alms to their Baal which is bought and sold.  
And lo ! there is no refuge, none but Baal  
For man's best help, and the mute recreant earth  
Drinks in its children's blood, and hears their wail,  
And deals no vengeance on its last foul birth ;  
And there is found no hand to ward or keep  
The weak from wrong, and Pity is asleep.



## XVIII.

Therefore do thou at least arise and warn,  
Not folded in thy mantle, a blind seer,  
But naked in thy anger, and new-born,  
As in the hour when thy voice sounded clear  
To the world's slaves, and tyrants quaked for fear.  
Thou hadst a message then, a word of scorn,  
First for thyself, thy own crimes' challenger,  
And next for those who withered in thy dawn.  
An hundred years have passed since that fair day,  
And still the world cries loud, in its desire,  
That right is wronged, and force alone has sway.  
What profit are they, thy guns' tongues of fire ?  
Nay, leave to England her sad creed of gold ;  
Plead thou man's rights, clean-handed as of old.

XIX.

Alas, that words like these should be but folly !

Behold, the Boulevard mocks, and I mock too.

Let us away and purge our melancholy

With the last laughter at the Ambigu—

Here all is real. Here glory's self is true

Through each regime to its own mission holy,

Of plying still the world with something new

To cure its ache, or nobly souled or lowly.

One title Paris holds above the rest

Untouched by time or fortune's change or frown,

One temple of high fame, where she sits dressed

In youth eternal and mirth's myrtle crown,

And where she writes, each night, with deathless  
hands,

“ To all the glories—of the stage—of France.”

## XX.

Enough, dear Paris ! We have laughed together,  
'Tis time that we should part, lest tears should  
come.

I must fare on from winter and rough weather  
And the dark tempests chained within Time's  
womb.

Southwards I go. Each footstep marks the tomb  
Of a dead pleasure. Melun, Fontainebleau,—

How shall I name them with the ghosts that roam  
In their deserted streets of long ago ?

I will not stop to weep. Before me lie

Lands larger in their purpose, and with dreams  
Peopled more purely ; and to these I fly

For ever from life's idler stratagems.

France ! thy white hand I kiss in suppliant guise,  
Too sad to love thee, and alas ! too wise.

\* \* \* \* \*

## XXI.

To Switzerland, the land of lakes and snow,  
And ancient freedom of ancestral type,  
And modern innkeepers who cringe and bow,  
And venal echoes, and Pans paid to pipe !  
See, I am come. And here in vineyards, ripe  
With sweet white grapes, I will sit down and read  
Once more the loves of Rousseau, till I wipe  
My eyes in tenderness for names long dead.  
This is the birthplace of all sentiment,  
The fount of modern tears. These hills in me  
Stir what still lives of fancy reverent  
For Mother Nature. Here Time's minstrelsy  
Awoke, some century since, one sunny morn,  
To find earth fortunate and man forlorn.

## XXII.

Unblest discovery of an age too real !

They needed not the beauty of the earth,  
Who held heaven's hope for their supreme ideal,  
And found in worlds unseen a better birth.

What to the eye of faith were the hills worth,  
The voiceless forests, the unpeopled coasts,  
The wildernesses void of sentient mirth ?  
In death men praise thee not, Thou Lord of  
Hosts !

But when faith faltered, when the hope grew dim,  
And heaven was hid with phantoms of despair,  
And man stood trembling on destruction's brim,  
Then turned he to the earth, and found her fair ;  
His home, his refuge, which no doubt could rob,  
A beauty throbbing to his own heart's throb.

## XXIII.

Voltaire and Rousseau, these were thy twin priests,

Proud mother Nature, on thy opening day.

The first with bitter gibes perplexed the feasts

Of thy high rival, and prepared the way ;

The other built thy shrine. 'Twas here, men

say,

De Warens lived, whose pleasure was the text

Of the new gospel of the sons of clay,

The latest born of time, by faith unvexed.

Here for a century with reverent feet

Pilgrims, oppressed with barrenness of soul,

Toiled in their tears as to a Paraclete.

On these white hills they heard earth's thunders

roll

In sneers outpreaching the lost voice of God,

And shouted " Ichabod, ay, Ichabod ! "

## XXIV.

And here too I, the latest fool of Time,  
Sad child of doubt and passionate desires,  
Touched with all pity, yet in league with crime,  
Watched the red sunsets from the Alpine spires,  
And lit my poet's lamp with kindred fires,  
And dared to snatch my share of the sublime.  
There was one with me, master of the choirs  
Of eloquent thought, who listening to my rhyme,  
And seeing in me a soul set on things  
Not wholly base, although my need was sore,  
Bade me take courage and essay new wings.  
And thus it was I first beheld this shore,  
Mourning the loss yet half consoled of gain,  
The passionate pleader of youth's creed of pain.

## XXV.

And what brave life it was we lived that tide,  
Lived, or essayed to live—for who shall say  
Youth garners aught but its own dreams denied,  
Or handles what it hoped for yesterday?  
High prophets were we of the uncultured lay,  
Supremely scorning all that to our pride  
Seemed less than truth. Be truth the thing it  
may,  
Our Goddess she, deformed but deified.  
Prophets and poets of the earth's last birth  
Revealed in ugliness, a blind despair,  
Only that we were young and of such worth  
As still can thrive upon life's leanest fare,  
And find in the world's turmoil its full quittance  
Of joy denied, however poor the pittance.



## XXVI.

Youth is all valiant. He and I together,  
Conscious of strength, and unproved of wrong,  
Strained at the world's conventions as a tether  
Too weak to bind us, and burst forth in song.  
The backs of fools we scourged as with a thong,  
And falsehood stripped to its last borrowed  
feather,  
And vowed to fact what things to fact belong,  
And of the rest asked neither why nor whether.  
Gravely we triumphed in that Gorgon time,  
Unsexed for us at length thro' lack of faith,  
Our barren mistress, from whose womb sublime  
No beauty more should spring, but only death.  
Like birds we sang by some volcanic brink,  
Leaning on ugliness, and did not shrink.

XXVII.

The poets, everyone, have sung of passion—

But which has sung of friendship, man with man ?

Love seeks its price, but friendship has a fashion

Larger to give, and of less selfish plan.

The world grows old. From Beersheba to Dan

We find all barren, ruby lips grown ashen,

Hearts hard with years—and only Jonathan

Weeping with David o'er a ruined nation.

Then in the depth of days and our despair,

We count our treasures, if so be remain

Some loving letters, rings and locks of hair.

Nay, mourn not love. These only are not vain,

Your manlier wounds, when in the front you stood,

For a friend's sake and your sworn Brotherhood.

## XXVIII.

Yet it is pitiful how friendships die,  
Spite of our oaths eternal and high vows.  
Some fall through blight of tongues wagged secretly,  
Some through strifes loud in empty honour's  
house.  
Some vanish with fame got too glorious,  
And rapt to heaven in fiery chariots fly ;  
And some are drowned in sloth and the carouse  
Of wedded joys and long love's tyranny.  
O ye, who with high-hearted valliance  
Deem truth eternal and youth's dreams divine,  
Keep ye from love and fame and the mischance  
Of other worship than the Muses nine.  
So haply shall you tread life's latest strand  
With a true brother still, and hand in hand.

XXIX.

How strangely now I come, a man of sorrow,  
Nor yet such sorrow as youth dreamed of, blind—  
But life's last indigence which dares not borrow  
One garment more of Hope to cheat life's wind.  
The mountains which we loved have grown un-  
kind,  
Nay, voiceless rather. Neither sound nor speech  
Is heard among them, nor the thought enshrined  
Of any deity man's tears may reach.  
If I should speak, what echo would there come,  
Of laughers lost, and dead unanswered prayers?  
The shadow of each valley is a tomb  
Filled with the dust of manifold despairs.  
"Here we once lived."—This motto on the door  
Of silence stands, shut fast for evermore.

\* \* \* \* \*

## XXX.

'Tis time I stepped from Horeb to the plain—  
Mountains, farewell. I need a heavier air.  
Youth's memories are not good for souls in pain,  
And each new age has its own meed of care.  
Farewell, sad Alps, you are my barrier  
Now to the North, and hold my passions slain  
For all life's vultures, as I downward fare  
To a new land of love which is not vain.  
How staid is Italy ! No gardened rose  
Scattering its leaves is chaster than she is,  
No cloister stiller, no retreat more close.  
There is a tameness even in her seas  
On which white towns look down, as who should  
say,  
"Here wise men long have lived, and live to-  
day."

XXXI.

Yes, Italy is wise, a cultured prude,  
Stored with all maxims of a statelier age ;  
These are her lessons for our northern blood,  
With its dark Saxon madness and Norse rage.  
With these she tempers us and renders sage,  
As long ago she stayed the barbarous flood  
Surging against her, and her heritage  
Snatched from the feet of that brute multitude.  
Calmly she waits us. What to her shall be  
Our fevers of to-day, who e'erwhile knew  
Cæsar's ambitions? What our pruriency,  
Who saw Rome sacked by the lewd Vandal crew ?  
What our despair, who, while a world stood  
mute,  
Saw Henry kneel in tears at Peter's foot ?

## XXXII.

To-day I was at Milan, in such thought

As pilgrims bring who at faith's threshold stand,  
Still burdened with the sorrows they have brought,  
And vexed with stranger tongues in a strange  
land.

And lo, this sign was given me. At my hand  
Hung that mysterious supper Vinci wrought  
With the sad twelve who were Christ's chosen  
band,

A type of vows and courage come to nought.

And, while I gazed, with a reproachful look

The bread was broken and the wine was poured,  
And the disciples raised their hands and spoke,  
Each asking "Is it I? and I too? Lord!"

And there was answered them this mournful cry:

"All shall abandon me to night." So I.

XXXIII.

So I, I am ashamed of my old life,

Here in this saintly presence of days gone,

Ashamed of my weak heart's unmeaning strife,

Its loves, its lusts, its battles lost and won,

And its long search of pleasure 'neath the sun,

And its scant courage to endure the knife,

And its vain longing for good deeds undone,

Ending in bitter words with railing rife.

I am unworthy, yet am comforted,

As one who driving o'er long trackless roads

Of brake and rock and briar with footsore steed

And springless chariot, searching for vain gods,

Finds the high road before him, where at ease

The old world plods the rut of centuries.





## XXXIV.

O fool ! O false ! I have abandoned heaven,  
And sold my wealth for metal of base kind.  
O, frail disciple of a fair creed given  
For human hope when all the world was blind !  
What was my profit ? Freedom of the mind,  
A little pleasure of the years, some scars  
Of lusty youth, and some few thoughts enshrined  
In worthier record of my manhood's years.  
All else is loss, and unredeemed distress ;  
The voiceful seasons uninvited come,  
And bring their tribute of new flowers, and pass :  
Only the reason of the world is dumb ;  
Nor does God any more by word or sign  
Speak to our rebel hearts of things divine.

XXXV.

At last I kneel in Rome, the bourne, the goal  
Of what a multitude of laden hearts !  
No pilgrim of them all a wearier soul  
Brought ever here, no master of dark arts  
A spirit vexed with more discordant parts,  
No beggar a scrip barer of all dole ;  
No son, alas, steps sorer with the darts  
Of that rebellious sorrow, his sin's toll.  
I kneel and make an offering of my care  
And folly, and hurt reason. Who would not  
In this fair city be the fool of prayer ?  
Who would not kneel, if only for the lot  
Of being born again—a soul forgiven,  
Clothed in new childhood and the light of heaven ?

## XXXVI.

The majesty of Rome to me is nought ;  
The imperial story of her conquering car  
Touches me only with compassionate thought  
For the doomed nations faded by her star.  
Her palaces of Cæsars tombstones are  
For a whole world of freedoms vainly caught  
In her high fortune. Throned was she in war ;  
By war she perished. So is justice wrought.  
A nobler Rome is here, which shall not die.  
She rose from the dead ashes of men's lust,  
And robed herself anew in chastity,  
And half redeemed man's heritage of dust.  
This Rome I fain would love, though darkly hid  
In mists of passion and desires scarce dead.

XXXVII.

I will release my soul of argument.

He that would love must follow with shut eyes.

My reason of the years was discontent,

My treasure for all hope a vain surmise.

I will have done with wisdom's sophistries,

Her insolence of wit. What man shall say

He comfort takes in the short hour that dies,

Because he knew it mortal yesterday?

The tree of knowledge bears a bitter fruit—

This is that other tree, whose branches hold

Fair store of faith, peace, pity absolute,

And deeds of virtue for a world grown cold.

If by its fruits the tree of life be known,

Here is a truth undreamed of Solomon.

## XXXVIII.

I saw one sitting on a kingly throne,

A man of age, whom time had touched with  
white ;

White were his brows, and white his vestment  
shone,

And white the childhood of his lips with light.

Only his eyes gleamed masterful and bright,

Holding the secrets shut of worlds unknown,

And in his hand the sceptre lay of might,

To bind and loose all souls beneath the sun.

Where is the manhood, where the Godhood here ?

The weak things of the world confound the wise.

Here is all weakness, let us cast out fear.

Here is all strength. Ah, screen me from those  
eyes,

The terrible eyes of Him who sees unseen

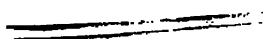
The thing that is, and shall be, and has been.

XXXIX.

Ancient of days ! What word is thy command  
To one befooled of wit and his own way ?  
What counsel hast thou, and what chastening hand  
For a lost soul grown old in its dismay ?  
What penance shall he do, what ransom pay,  
Of blood poured out for faith in a far land,  
What mute knee-service, weeping here to-day,  
In words of prayer no ear shall understand ?  
Let him thy servant be, the least of all  
In the Lord's Courts, but near thy mysteries,  
To touch the crumbs which from thy table fall.  
Let him——. But lo, thou speakest ; “ not with  
these  
Is God delighted. Get thee homeward hence,  
They need thee more who wait deliverance ! ”

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**THE IDLER'S CALENDAR.**







## THE IDLER'S CALENDAR.

### JANUARY.

#### COVER SHOOTING.

The week at Whinwood next to Christmas week.

Six guns, no more, but all good men and true,  
Of the clean-visaged sort, with ruddy cheek  
Which knows not care. Light-hearted Montagu

At the cover's end, as down the wind they flew,  
Has stopped his score of pheasants, every beak,  
Without more thought of Juliet than of you ;  
And still I hear his loud-mouthed Purdeys speak.  
Tybalt and Paris, with a bet on hand,

Have fired at the same woodcock. "Truce,"  
say I,  
"To civil jars,"—for look, as by command,

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Bunch following bunch, a hundred pheasants fly.  
Now battle, murder, death on every side !

Right, left, left, right, we pile up agony,  
Till night stops all. Then home in chastened  
pride,

With aching heads, our slaughter satisfied.

FEBRUARY.

UNDER THE SPEAKER'S GALLERY.

In all the comedy of human things


What is more mirthful than for those, who sit  
Far from the great world's vain imaginings,  
To mingle in its war of words and wit,  
A listener here, when Greek meets Greek, Fox  
Pitt,

At question time in the Queen's Parliament?

'Tis the arena of old Rome: Here meet  
More than mere Dacians on mere slaughter bent.  
Yonder and close to Mr. Speaker's chair,  
Enfolding all things in a net of words,  
Stands our first gymnast. Let the rest beware.

The Tory Stafford, with voice sweet as bird's,  
Shall answer him anon, or bolder borne

And if luck favours, from the nether herds  
A voice of patriot wrath shall rise in scorn,  
Or even young Cassius blow his windy horn.



MARCH.

A WEEK AT PARIS.

When loud March from the east begins to blow,  
     And earth and heaven are black, then off we hie  
 By the night train to Paris, where we know  
     Three windows set to the meridian sky,  
     A third floor in the Rue de Rivoli.  
 There we will stop and see the fair world move  
     For our sole pleasure past us, you and I,  
 And make pretence we are once more in love.  
 We need not fret at loss of pence or time,  
     Though Father Bignon's smiles are paid in gold.  
 This life in idleness is more sublime  
     Than all our toil and all our wealth twice told.  
 We need not fret. To-night for us shall Faure,  
     Sara, Dupuis, or L'heritier unfold  
 New stores of mirth and music, and once more  
 We two shall sup, and at the Maison D'or.

APRIL.

TROUT-FISHING.

This morning, through my window, half awake,  
I felt the south wind blow ; and presently,  
With a tumultuous thrill and then a shake,  
The nightingale broke forth in melody.  
I rose in haste, and looked at the grey sky,  
And read an omen. From its corner next  
A book I drew, blest book, where fly on fly  
Are all the letters of its well-thumbed text.  
I chose my cast, a march-brown and a dun,  
And ran down to the river, chasing hope.  
At the first throw a mighty trout was on,  
A very Samson, fit to burst a rope,  
Yet tamed by one sad hank of yielding hair  
And fate, the fisherman of king and pope.  
Upon the grass he lies, and gasps the air,  
Four silver pounds, sublimely fat and fair.

MAY.


THE LONDON SEASON.

I still love London in the month of May,  
     By an old habit, spite of dust and din.  
 I love the fair adulterous world, whose way  
     Is by the pleasant banks of Serpentine.  
     I love the worshippers at fashion's shrine,  
 The flowers, the incense, and the pageantry  
     Of generations which still ask a sign  
 Of that dear god, whose votary am I.  
 I love the "greetings in the market-place,"  
     The jargon of the clubs. I love to view  
 The "gilded youth" who at the window pass,  
     Forever smiling smiles for ever new.  
 I love these men and women at their task  
     Of hunting pleasure. Hope, mysterious too,  
 Touches my arm and points, and seems to ask  
 "And you, have you no Juliet in the masque?"

JUNE.

A DAY AT HAMPTON COURT.

It is our custom, once in every year,  
Mine and two others', when the chestnut trees  
Are white at Bushey, Ascot being near,  
To drive to Hampton Court, and there, at ease  
In that most fair of English palaces,  
Spend a long summer's day. What better cheer  
Than the old "Greyhound's," seek it where you  
please?  
And where a royal garden statelier?  
The morning goes in tennis, a four set,  
With George the marker. 'Tis a game for gods,  
Full of return and volley at the net,  
And laughter and mirth-making episodes  
Not wholly classic. But the afternoon  
Finds us punt-fishing idly with our rods,  
Nodding and half in dreams, till all too soon  
Darkness and dinner drive us back to town.





JULY.

GOODWOOD.

To the high breezes of the Goodwood Down  
     London has fled, and there awhile forgets  
 Its weariness of limb on lawns new-mown  
     And in green shadows all its wars and frets.  
     Thither we too will bring our calumets  
 In sign of peace restored o'er fashion slain,  
     Weaning our souls from folly with small bets  
 Of gloves and crowns with laughing ringwomen.  
 The sport is fair, luck fair, and Nature's face  
     Fairest of all. We neither make nor mar  
 A fortune here. Yet we were rich with less  
     Than this week's pleasure conquered from the  
         year.

I would not for a million not have seen  
     Fred Archer finish upon Guinevere.  
 Hark ! They are off again, a half mile spin,  
 Four of the dozen backed and bound to win.

AUGUST.

ON THE THAMES.

The river Thames has many a dear delight  
In summer days for souls which know not guile,  
Or souls too careless of the vain world's spite  
To heed its frowning while the heavens smile.  
In boyhood all our pleasure was in toil,  
As with bent backs we laboured at the oar ;  
We loved to spend our strength in the turmoil  
Of speed disputed, conquered, conqueror.  
But other years brought other joys. Alas !  
Where is fair Rosamund, our heart's first queen,  
Whose foot so lightly trod with us the grass,  
Though burdened with the hundred loves of men,  
At Kew, at Skindle's ? But no more of this.  
We still have joys, and still old Thames is green.  
Still on his back we float awhile and press  
His hand in hope, and call it happiness.

SEPTEMBER.

FEAST OF ST. PARTRIDGE.

The only saint in all our calendar

Is good St. Partridge. 'Tis his feast to-day,

The happiest day of all a happy year,

And heralded as never yet was May.

The dawn has found us marshalled for the fray,

Striding the close-shorn stubbles ranked in line,

With lust of battle and with lust of play

Made glorious drunk as men are drunk with wine.

There go the coveys, forward birds and strong,

Bound for the mangold where they wheel and  
stop.

Now, steady, men, and bring the left along.

A fortune waits us in each turnip-top.

With a wild shriek, and then a whirr of wings,

The covey rises. Brace and brace they drop,

Joining the dead ranks of forgotten things

In glorious death, the fierce delight of kings.

OCTOBER.

GAMBLING AT MONACO.

A jewelled kingdom set impregnable  
In gardens green which front the violet sea,  
A happy fortress shut and guarded well,  
And cradled ever on the mountain's knee.  
Here M. Blanc, sad prince of industry,  
Has reared the palace which men call his hell ;  
And here in autumn days, when winds blow free,  
Pleasure shall lead us to sin's citadel.  
Alas for vice ! Yet, who dares moralize  
In the hushed rooms, where fortune reigns alway ?  
Her solemn priest, with chink of coin, replies  
" Messieurs, faites votre jeu. Le jeu est fait."  
Who dares be wise, lest wisdom's self be vexed ?  
For all who come to preach remain to play.  
Nay—leave poor vice, say I, her pleasant text,  
Nor grudge her heaven in this world with the next.

NOVEMBER.

ACROSS COUNTRY.

November's here.—Once more the pink we don,  
 And on old Centaur, at the coverside,  
 Sit changing pleasant greetings one by one  
 With friend and neighbour. Half the county's  
 pride  
 Is here to-day. Squire, parson, peer, bestride  
 Their stoutest nags, impatient to be gone.  
 Here, schoolboys on their earliest ponies ride,  
 And village lads on asses, not out-done.  
 But hark ! That sounds like music. Ay, by God !  
 He's off across the fallow. "No, sirs, no ;  
 "Not yet a minute, just another rod !  
 "Then let him have it. Ho, there, tallyho !"  
 Now that's worth seeing ! Look ! He's topped  
 the wall,  
 Leaving his whole field pounded in a row.  
 A first flight place to-day was worth a fall—  
 So forward each, and heaven for us all !

DECEMBER.

AWAY TO EGYPT.

Enough, enough ! This winter is too rude,  
Too dark of countenance, of tooth too keen.  
Nature finds rebels now in flesh and blood,  
And hearts grow sick for change and eyes for  
green.  
Let us away. What profits it that men  
Are wise as gods, if winter holds its sway,  
If blood be chilled, and numbness clasp the  
brain ?  
Frost is too stubborn. Let us then away !  
Away to Egypt ! There we may forget  
All but the presence of the blessed sun.  
There in our tents well-housed, sublimely set  
Under a pyramid, with horse and gun,  
We may make terms with Nature and, awhile,  
Put as it were our souls to grass, and run  
Barefooted and barehearted in the smile  
Of that long summer which still girds the Nile.

## THE OLD SQUIRE.

### I.

I like the hunting of the hare  
Better than that of the fox ;  
I like the joyous morning air,  
And the crowing of the cocks.

### II.

I like the calm of the early fields,  
The ducks asleep by the lake,  
The quiet hour which Nature yields,  
Before mankind is awake.

### III.

I like the pheasants and feeding things  
Of the unsuspecting morn ;  
I like the flap of the wood-pigeon's wings  
As she rises from the corn.

IV.

I like the blackbird's shriek, and his rush  
From the turnips as I pass by,  
And the partridge hiding her head in a bush,  
For her young ones cannot fly.

V.

I like these things, and I like to ride,  
When all the world is in bed,  
To the top of the hill where the sky grows wide,  
And where the sun grows red.

VI.

The beagles at my horse heels trot,  
In silence after me ;  
There's Ruby, Roger, Diamond, Dot,  
Old Slut and Margery,—

VII.

A score of names well used, and dear,  
The names my childhood knew ;  
The horn, with which I rouse their cheer,  
Is the horn my father blew.



## VIII.

I like the hunting of the hare  
Better than that of the fox ;  
The new world still is all less fair  
Than the old world it mocks.

## IX.

I covet not a wider range  
Than these dear manors give ;  
I take my pleasures without change,  
And as I lived I live.

## X.

I leave my neighbours to their thought ;  
My choice it is, and pride,  
On my own lands to find my sport,  
In my own fields to ride.

## XI.

The hare herself no better loves  
The field where she was bred,  
Than I the habit of these groves,  
My own inherited.

XII.

I know my quarries every one,  
The meuse where she sits low ;  
The road she chose to-day was run  
A hundred years ago.

XIII.

The lags, the gills, the forest ways,  
The hedgerows one and all,  
These are the kingdoms of my chase,  
And bounded by my wall ;

XIV.

Nor has the world a better thing,  
Though one should search it round,  
Than thus to live one's own sole king,  
Upon one's own sole ground.

XV.

I like the hunting of the hare ;  
It brings me, day by day,  
The memory of old days as fair,  
With dead men past away.

## XVI.

To these, as homeward still I ply  
And pass the churchyard gate,  
Where all are laid as I must lie,  
I stop and raise my hat.

## XVII.

I like the hunting of the hare ;  
New sports I hold in scorn.  
I like to be as my fathers were,  
In the days e'er I was born.

## SANCHO SANCHEZ.

### I.

Sancho Sanchez lay a-dying in the house of  
Mariquita,

For his life ebbed with the ebbing of the red  
wound in his side.

And he lay there as they left him when he came  
from the Corrida

In his gold embroidered jacket and his red cloak  
and his pride.

### II.

But at cockcrow in the morning, when the con-  
vents of Sevilla

Suddenly rang aloud to matins, Sanchez wakened  
with a cry,

And he called to Mariquita, bade her summon his  
cuadrilla,

That they all might stand around him in the  
hour when he should die.

## III.

For he thought in his bold bosom, "I have ventured with them often,  
And have led the way to honour upon every ring in Spain.  
And now in this the hardest of the fields that I have fought in  
I would choose that every face of them were witness of my pain.

## IV.

"For their stern eyes would upbraid me if I went down to the battle  
Without a friend to cheer me, or at least a fool to hiss.  
And they hold it all unworthy men should die like fatted cattle  
Stricken singly in the darkness at the shambles of Cadiz."

## V.

Then he bade the lamps be lighted, and he made  
them bring a mirror,  
Lest his cheeks should have grown paler in the  
watches of the night.  
For he feared lest his disciples should mistrust  
his soul of terror,  
When they came to look upon him, if they saw  
his face was white.

## VI.

Oh, long time in the mirror did he look with  
awful smiling  
At the eyes which gazed out at him, while the  
women watched him mute.  
And he marked how death's white fingers had  
been clammily defiling  
The redness of God's image and had wiped the  
sunburns out.

## F



## VII.

Then he spake, "Go fetch the carmine from the  
side drawer of the table,  
Where Mariquita keeps it." But, when it was  
not found,  
"Tis no matter," answered Sanchez, "we must  
do what we are able."  
And he painted his cheeks' paleness with the  
red blood of his wound.

## VIII.

And anon there came a murmur as of voices and  
a humming  
On the staircase, and he knew them by their  
footsteps at the door.  
And he leant up on his pillow that his eyes might  
see them coming  
In their order of the plaza as they strode  
across the floor.

IX.

And when they stood around him, in their stately  
mantas folded,  
With a solemn grief outlawing the brute laughter  
of their eyes,  
You had deemed them in the lamplight to be  
bronzen statues moulded  
Of the powers of Nature yielding a brave man  
in sacrifice.

X.

But the soul of Sanchez quailed not, and he  
laughed in their sad faces,  
Crying loud to Mariquita for the Valdepeñas  
wine.  
“A fair pig-skin, Caballeros, blushes here for your  
embraces.  
And I drink to you your fortune, and I pray  
you drink to mine.”



## XI.

Then they filled their leathern flagons, and they  
held them up together

In a ghastly expectation till their chief should  
give the sign.

And the red wine in the silence flowed like blood  
adown the leather.

And the red blood from the pillow trickled  
drop by drop like wine.

## XII.

Spake the Master, "E'er I pledge you, look upon  
me, men, and hearken,

For I have a thing to utter, and a dying man  
is wise.

Death is weighing down my eyelids. Silently  
your faces darken.

But another torch is lighted than the daylight  
in my eyes.

XIII.

“Life, I see it now as never I had thought to  
comprehend it,  
Like the lines which old Manola used to write  
upon the sand,  
And we looked on in wonder nor guessed till it  
was ended  
The birds and trees and faces which were grow-  
ing from her hand.

XIV.

“Meaning was there from the outset, glorious  
meaning in our calling,  
In the voice of emulation and our boyhood’s  
pride of soul,  
From the day when first the capa from our  
father’s shoulders falling  
We were seized with inspiration and rushed out  
upon the bull.

## XV.

“Meaning was there in our courage and the calm  
of our demeanour,  
For there stood a foe before us which had need  
of all our skill.  
And our lives were as the programme, and the  
world was our arena,  
And the wicked beast was death, and the horns  
of death were hell.

## XVI.

“And the boast of our profession was a bulwark  
against danger  
With its fearless expectation of what good or ill  
may come,  
For the very prince of darkness shall burst forth  
on us no stranger  
When the doors of death fly open to the rolling  
of the drum.

## XVII.

“ As I lay here in the darkness, I beheld a sign  
from heaven,  
Standing close a golden angel by the footpost  
of my bed,  
And in his hand a letter with the seal and arms  
engraven  
Of the glorious San Fernando which he bade  
me read and read.

## XVIII.

“ And the message of his master, the blessed king  
my patron,  
Was to bid me in his honour to hold myself at  
need  
For this very day and morning of his feast and  
celebration,  
And in pledge of his high favour he had sent  
me his own steed.

## XIX.

“For the lists of heaven were open, and that day  
they had decreed it

There should be a special function for the glory  
of his name.

And the beasts were Sevillanos, and a master's  
hand was needed

Lest the swords of heaven should falter and  
the Saint be put to shame.

## XX.

“And I heard the potro stamping in the street,  
and would have risen

But that Mariquita held me and the women and  
my wound.

And, though the angel left me, it was truth and  
not a vision,

And I know the Saint has called me, and the  
place where I am bound.

## XXI.

“I shall fight this day in heaven, and, though all  
hell shall assail me,

I have hope of a good issue, for perhaps I have  
some skill,

And perhaps, if I should stumble or if my hand  
should fail me,

There are others in the plaza who have vowed  
me less than ill.

## XXII.

“And my mantle of salvation is the faith which is  
our charter,

And the Virgin of the Pillar my protector and  
reward,

And the hosts of heaven my witness and each  
Spanish Saint and Martyr,

And our Lord Don Santiago himself has lent  
the sword.”

## XXIII.

Thus he spoke, and on his speaking fell a silence  
and a wonder,  
While the eyes of his companions turned in awe  
from each to each,  
And they waited in expectance for the gates to  
roll asunder,  
And the voices of the angels to command him  
to the breach,—

## XXIV.

Waited till the sun uprising sent his glory through  
the chamber  
And the spent lamps paled and flickered on the  
shame of their dismay,  
And the dying man transfigured passed in silence  
from his slumber,  
Like a king to coronation, in the light of his  
new day.

XXV.

Only they that stood the closest say the pale lips  
curved and parted,

And the eyes flashed out in battle, and the  
fingers sought the sword.

“’Tis the President has called him,” said Fernan-  
dez the true hearted,

“He has thrown his hat behind him for the  
glory of the Lord !”



## ACROSS THE PAMPAS.

### I.

Dost thou remember, oh, dost thou remember,  
Here as we sit at home and take our rest,  
How we went out one morning on a venture  
In the West ?

### II.

Hast thou forgotten in these English hedgerows,  
How the great Pampas rolled out like the sea ?  
Never a daisy in that mighty meadow !  
Never a tree !

### III.

Full were our hearts upon that sunny morning ;  
Stout-handed and stout-hearted went we forth.  
The warm wind in our faces breathed us fortune  
From the North ;

IV.

And high in heaven the sun stood for a token.

We had no other sign by which to steer.

No landmark is there in the earth's great ocean,

For mariner.

V.

Dost thou remember how, when night was falling,

There in the middle plain, as best we might,

We set our little tent up as a fortress

For the night ?

VI.

Dost thou remember how, through the night  
watches,

We listened to the voices of the plain,

The owls and plovers and the bold bischachas,

Talking like men ?



## VII.

Drowsy we sat, and watched our horses feeding,  
Dim through the night, while over the tent's  
mouth  
The Cross was turning like a clock and reeling  
In the South.

## VIII.

But, as the night grew out and we grew chilly,  
Under our blankets safe we crept and warm,  
Full of good heart and each with loaded pistols  
Close to his arm ;

## IX.

And so dreamed pleasant dreams of far off faces,  
And trees and fields which we had loved in youth,  
All in a maze of present apprehension  
Mingled uncouth ;

X.


And how we travelled on and ever onwards,  
Still in the red path of the setting sun,  
Until into the heart of a great woodland  
We had come ;

XI.

And there saw, round about our strange encamp-  
ment,  
Flocks of bright birds which flew and screamed  
at us,  
Red cardinals and woodpeckers and parrots  
Multitudinous ;

XII.

And on the lake black-headed swans were sailing,  
And in the morning to the water's brink  
Flamingoes, like the rising sun, came wading  
Down to drink.



## XIII.

Dost thou remember, oh dost thou remember  
How, in that fatal wood, the mancaròn  
Found out a poisonous herb before his fellows,  
And fed thereon ;

## XIV.

And how we left him, and how Cæsar sickened,  
And how the sky grew dark and overcast,  
And how two tragic days we rode on silent  
In the blast ;

## XV.

And how the wind grew icy and more icy,  
Until we could not feel our hands or feet,  
As sick at heart we sought in vain a hiding  
From the sleet ;

XVI.

Lighting at last on a deserted post house,  
Where we found shelter from the wind, but  
nought  
Of entertainment for our souls or comfort  
Of any sort ;

XVII.

And how in that wild pass brave Cæsar dying  
Stretched out his hand towards the promised  
land,  
And saw as in a dream the white hills lying  
Close at hand,—

XVIII.

For, e'er the sun set, suddenly that evening,  
The great plain opened out beneath our feet,  
And, in a valley far below, lay gleaming,  
With square and street,

## XIX.

And spire and dome and pinnacle, uprising  
White on the bosom of a mountain slope,  
To our amazement bodily the city  
Of our hope.

## XX.

Dost thou remember, oh, dost thou remember  
How the bells rang as, sick and travelworn,  
A weary crew, we made our solemn entry  
To the town ?

## XXI.

Strangely, as phantoms out of the great desert,  
We came into the city, and at last  
Heard sound of Christian singing in the churches  
As we passed :

XXII.

And laid at length our our weary limbs in rapture  
Between the clean sheets of a Christian bed.  
Oh ! there are things I think we shall remember  
When we are dead.





FROM THE ARABIC.



## FROM THE ARABIC.

### I.

#### THE CAMEL-RIDER.

### I.


There is no thing in all the world but love,  
No jubilant thing of sun or shade worth one sad  
tear.

Why dost thou ask my lips to fashion songs  
Other than this, my song of love to thee ?

### II.

See where I lie and pluck the thorns of grief,  
Dust on my head and fire, as one who mourns his  
slain.

Are they not slain, my treasures of dear peace ?  
This their red burial is, sand heaped on sand.



## III.

Here came I in the morning of my joys.  
Before the dawn was born, through the dark downs  
    I rode.  
The low stars led me on as with a voice,  
Stars of the scorpion's tail in the deep south.

## IV.

Sighing I came, and scattering wide the sand.  
No need had I to urge her speed with hand or heel,  
The creature I bestrode. She knew my haste,  
And knew the road I sought, the road to thee.

## V.

Jangling her bells aloud in wantonness,  
And sighing soft, she too, her sighs to my soul's  
    sighs ;  
Behind us the wind followed thick with scents  
Of incense blossoms and the dews of night.

VI.

The thorn trees caught at us with their crook'd  
hands ;

The hills in blackness hemmed us in and hid the  
road ;

The spectres of the desert howled and warned ;  
I heeded nothing of their words of woe.

VII.

Thus till the dawn I sped in my desire,  
Breasting the ridges, slope on slope, till morning  
broke ;

And lo ! the sun revealed to me no sign,  
And lo ! the day was widowed of my hope.

VIII.

Where are the tents of pleasure and dear love,  
Set in the Vale of Thyme, where winds in Spring  
are fain ?

The highways of the valley, where they stood  
Strong in their flocks, are there. But where are they ?

## IX.

The plain was dumb, as emptied of all voice ;  
No bleat of herds, no camels roaring far below  
Told of their presence in the pastures void,  
Of the waste places which had been their homes.

## X.

I climbed down from my watch-tower of the rocks,  
To where the tamarisks grow, and the dwarf palms,  
alarmed.  
I called them with my voice, as the deer calls,  
Whose young the wolves have hunted from their  
place.

## XI.

I sought them in the foldings of the hill,  
In the deep hollows shut with rocks, where no  
winds blow :  
I sought their footstep under the tall cliffs,  
Shut from the storms, where the first lambs are  
born.

XII.

The tamarisk boughs had blossomed in the night,  
And the white broom which bees had found, the  
wild bees' brood.

But no dear signal told me of their life,  
No spray was torn in all that world of flowers.

XIII.

Where are the tents of pleasure and dear love,  
For which my soul took ease for its delight in  
Spring,  
The black tents of her people beautiful  
Beyond the beauty of the sons of kings?

XIV.

The wind of war has swept them from their place,  
Scattering them wide as quails, whom the hawk's  
hate pursues ;  
The terror of the sword importunate  
Was at their backs, nor spared them as they flew.



## XV.

The summer wind has passed upon their fields ;  
The rain has purged their hearth-stones, and made  
smooth their floors ;  
Low in the valley lie their broken spears,  
And the white bones which are their tale forlorn.

## XVI.

Where are the sons of Saba in the South,  
The men of mirth and pride to whom my songs  
were sung,  
The kinsmen of her soul who is my soul,  
The brethren of her beauty whom I love ?

## XVII.

She mounted her tall camel in the waste,  
Loading it high for flight with her most precious  
things ;  
She went forth weeping in the wilderness,  
Alone with fear on that far night of ill.

XVIII.


She fled mistrusting, as the wild roe flees,  
Turning her eyes behind her, while fear fled before ;  
No other refuge knew she than her speed,  
And the black land that lies where night is born.

XIX.

Under what canopy of sulphurous heaven,  
Dark with the thunderclouds unloosing their mad  
tongues,  
Didst thou lie down aweary of thy burden,  
In that dread place of silence thou hadst won ?

XX.

Close to what shelter of what naked rocks,  
Carved with what names of terror of what kings  
of old,  
Near to what monstrous shapes unmerciful,  
Watching thy death, didst thou give up thy soul ?



## XXI.

Or dost thou live by some forgotten well,  
Waiting thy day of ransom to return and smile,  
As the birds come when Spring is in the heaven,  
And dost thou watch me near while I am blind ?

## XXII.

Blind in my tears, because I only weep,  
Kindling my soul to fire because I mourn my slain,  
My kindred slain, and thee, and my dear peace,  
Making their burial thus, sand heaped on sand.

## XXIII.

For see, there nothing is in all the world  
But only love worth any strife or song or tear.  
Ask me not then to sing or fashion songs  
Other than this, my song of love to thee.

## FROM THE ARABIC.

### II.

#### THE DESOLATE CITY.

##### I.

Dark to me is the earth. Dark to me are the  
heavens.

Where is she that I loved, the woman with eyes  
like stars ?

Desolate are the streets. Desolate is the city,  
A city taken by storm, where none are left but  
the slain !


##### II.

Sadly I rose at dawn, undid the latch of my shutters,

Thinking to let in light, but I only let in love.

Birds in the boughs were awake ; I listened to their  
chaunting ;

Each one sang to his love ; only I was alone.



## III.

This, I said in my heart, is the hour of life and of  
pleasure,

Now each creature on earth has his joy, and lives  
in the sun,

Each in another's eyes finds light, the light of  
compassion,

This is the moment of pity, this is the moment of  
love.

## IV.

Speak, O desolate city ! Speak, O silence in sad-  
ness !

Where is she that I loved in my strength, that  
spoke to my soul ?

Where are those passionate eyes that appealed to  
my eyes in passion ?

Where is the mouth that kissed me, the breast  
I laid to my own ?

V.

Speak, thou soul of my soul, for rage in my heart  
is kindled.

Tell me, where didst thou flee on the day of  
destruction and fear?

See, my arms still enfold thee, enfolding thus all  
heaven,

See, my desire is fulfilled in thee, for it fills the  
earth.

VI.

Thus in my grief I lamented. Then turned I from  
the window,

Turned to the stair, and the open door, and the  
empty street,

Crying aloud in my grief, for there was none to  
chide me,

None to mock at my weakness, none to behold  
my tears.

H

## VII.

Groping I went, as blind. I sought her house, my  
beloved's.

There I stopped at the silent door, and listened  
and tried the latch.

Love, I cried, dost thou slumber? This is no hour  
for slumber,

This is the hour of love, and love I bring in my  
hand.

## VIII.

I knew the house, with its windows barred, and  
its leafless fig-tree,

Climbing round by the doorstep the only one in  
the street ;

I knew where my hope had climbed to its goal and  
there encircled

All that those desolate walls once held, my  
beloved's heart.

IX.

There in my grief she consoled me. She loved me  
when I loved not.

She put her hand in my hand, and set her lips to  
my lips.

She told me all her pain and showed me all her  
trouble.

I, like a fool, scarce heard, hardly returned her  
kiss.

X.

Love, thy eyes were like torches. They changed  
as I beheld them.

Love, thy lips were like gems, the seal thou  
settest on my life.

Love, if I loved not then, behold this hour thy  
vengeance ;

This is the fruit of thy love and thee, the unwise  
grown wise.



## XI.

Weeping strangled my voice. I called out, but  
none answered ;  
Blindly the windows gazed back at me, dumbly  
the door ;  
She whom I love, who loved me, looked not on  
my yearning,  
Gave me no more her hands to kiss, showed me  
no more her soul.

## XII.

Therefore the earth is dark to me, the sunlight  
blackness,  
Therefore I go in tears and alone, by night and  
day ;  
Therefore I find no love in heaven, no light, no  
beauty,  
A heaven taken by storm, where none are left  
but the slain !

## FROM THE ARABIC.

### III.

#### THE GRIEF OF LOVE.

##### I.

Love, I am sick for thee, sick with an absolute grief,  
Sick with the thought of thy eyes and lips and  
bosom.

All the beauty I saw, I see to my hurt revealed.  
All that I felt I feel to-day for my pain and sorrow.

##### II.

Love, I would fain forget thee, hide thee in deeper  
night,  
Shut thee where no thought is, in the grave with  
tears.

Love, I would turn my face to the wall and, if  
needs be, die ;  
Death less cruel were than thy eyes which have  
blinded me.

## III.

Since thou art gone from me, glory is gone from  
my life ;  
Dumb are the woods and streams, and dumb the  
voice of my soul ;  
Dead are the flowers we loved, blackened and sere  
with blight,  
Earth is frost-bound under my foot where our  
footsteps trod.

## IV.

Give me back for my sorrow the days of senseless  
peace,  
Days when I thought not of thee, or thought  
in wisdom ;  
Let me see thee once more as thou to my folly  
wert,  
A woman senseless as sounding brass or as  
tinkling cymbal.

v.

Why didst thou show me thy heart, which I thought  
not of?

Why didst thou bare me thy soul, who to me  
wert soulless?

Why didst thou kiss my mouth, when my mouth  
did mock?

Why didst thou speak to my lips of love, e'er my  
lips had spoken?

vi.

Love, thou hast made me thine, thine, and in my  
despite,

Laying thy hand on my heart in the soft Spring  
weather;

Love, thou hast bought my soul at a price, the price  
of thine,

Never again to mock at love, ah, never, never!

## FROM THE ARABIC.

### IV.

#### A LOVE SECRET.

##### I.

Love has its secrets, joy has its revealings :  
How shall I speak of that which love has hid ?  
If my beloved shall return to greet me,  
Deeds shall be done for her none ever did.

##### II.

My beloved loved me. How shall I reveal it ?  
We were alone that morning in the street.  
She looked down at the ground, and blushed, and  
trembled.  
She stopped me with her eyes when these did  
meet.

III.

“What wouldst thou, sweet one? What wouldst  
thou with sorrow,  
Thou, the new morning star with me, the night?  
What are those flowers thou holdest to thy bosom?  
What are the thoughts thou hidest from my  
sight?”

IV.

“Thine are these flowers,” she said, “these  
foolish roses,  
And thine the thoughts, if thus it be thy will.  
I hold them close for fear that thou shouldst mock  
me,  
I hold them to my heart for fear of ill.”

V.

“Nay, what of ill? 'Tis only age is evil,  
Only forgetfulness and grief and pain;  
What dost thou know of grief, that thou shouldst  
fear it?  
Mine is the grief who cannot love again.”

## VI.

She raised her eyes, she looked at me in  
wonder,

“The ache is here,” she said, “by night and  
day ;

I cannot teach my heart to bear its burden,  
I cannot turn my silence from its way.”

## VII.

“Speak to me, child. I am thy wise physician ;  
A man acquainted with all grief can teach ;  
There is no sorrow but has joy for sister,  
No silence but finds counterpart in speech.”

## VIII.

My beloved laughed. She saw through my dis-  
sembling ;

She held to me her hand, that I might kiss,  
The inside of her hand. 'Twas like a petal  
Of her own roses, but more dear than this.

IX.


I felt its pulses, like a bird in prison ;  
    “Sweet child,” I said, “what wouldst thou I  
        should prove ?  
I cannot make thee wiser than thy wisdom,  
    Who knowest all things since thou knowest  
        love.”

X.

How shall I tell it ? How shall I reveal it ?  
    I led her by the hand, as thus I said,  
Back from the street to where it stood, my dwelling,  
    And closed the door on where it stood, my bed.

XI.

Her laughter stopped. “Nay, use not thou un-  
        kindly,  
    Thine is the hand to deal or spare the blame ;  
I dare not be to thee thus uninvited,  
    Thou dost not know me, hast not learned my  
        name.”





## XII.

How shall I tell it? How shall I reveal it?

Love in that instant found its latest birth,  
“Soul of my soul,” I cried, “thy name is Pleasure,  
The sweetest thing to love on this sad earth.”

## XIII.

I held her in my arms, I pressed her fastly,

“Ah, if thou lovedst me indeed,” she cried.  
“I love thee, and I love thee,” was my answer,  
“My sister, my beloved one, my bride!”

## XIV.

Love has its secrets. Joy has its revealings.

I speak of this which love in vain has hid;  
If my beloved shall return to greet me,  
Deeds shall be done for her none ever did.

PASTORAL POEMS.



## WORTH FOREST.

### A PASTORAL.

Come, Prudence, you have done enough to-day—  
The worst is over, and some hours of play  
We both have earned, even more than rest, from  
toil ;

Our minds need laughter, as a spent lamp oil,  
And after their long fast a recompense.  
How sweet the evening is with its fresh scents  
Of briar and fern distilled by the warm wind !  
How green a robe the rain has left behind !  
How the birds laugh !—What say you to a walk  
Over the hill, and our long promised talk  
About the rights and wrongs of infancy ?  
Our patients are asleep, dear angels, she  
Holding the boy in her ecstatic arms,  
As mothers do, and free from past alarms,

The child grown calm. If we, an hour or two,  
Venture to leave them, 'tis but our hope's due.  
My tongue is all agog to try its speed  
To a new listener, like a long-stalled steed  
Loosed in a meadow, and the Forest lies  
At hand, the theme of its best flatteries.  
See, Prudence, here, your hat, where it was thrown  
The night you found me in the house alone  
With my worst fear and these two helpless things.  
Please God, that worst has folded its black wings,  
And we may let our thoughts on pleasure run  
Some moments in the light of this good sun.  
They sleep in heaven's guard. Our watch to-  
night  
Will be the braver for a transient sight—  
The only one perhaps more fair than they—  
Of Nature dressed for her June holiday.

\* \* \* \* \*

This is the watershed between the Thames  
And the South coast. On either hand the streams  
Run to the great Thames valley and the sea,

The Downs, which should oppose them, servilely  
Giving them passage. Who would think these

Downs,

Which look like mountains when the sea-mist  
crowns

Their tops in autumn, were so poor a chain?

Yet they divide no pathways for the rain,

Nor store up waters, in this pluvius age,

More than the pasteboard barriers of a stage.

The crest lies here. From us the Medway flows

To drain the Weald of Kent, and hence the Ouse

Starts for the Channel at Newhaven. Both

These streams run eastward, bearing North and  
South.

But, to the West, the Adur and the Arun

Rising together, like twin rills of Sharon,

Go forth diversely, this through Shoreham gap,

And that by Arundel to ocean's lap.

All are our rivers, by our Forest bred,

And one besides which with more reverend heed

We need to speak, for her desert is great

Beyond the actual wealth of her estate,—  
For Spenser sang of her, the River Mole,  
And Milton knew her name, though he, poor soul,  
Had never seen her, as I think being blind,  
And so miscalled her sullen. Others find  
Her special merit to consist in this :  
A maiden coyness, and her shy device  
Of mole-like burrowing,—and in truth her way  
Is hollowed out and hidden from the day,  
Under deep banks and the dark overgrowth  
Of knotted alder roots and stumps uncouth,  
From source to mouth, and once at Mickleham,  
She fairly digs her grave, in deed and name,  
And disappears.—There is an early trace  
Of this propensity to devious ways  
Shown by the little tributary brook  
Which bounds our fields, for lately it forsook  
Its natural course, to burrow out a road  
Under an ash tree in its neighbourhood.  
But whether this a special virtue is,  
Or like some virtues but a special vice,

We need not argue. This at least is true,  
 That in the Mole are trout, and many too,  
 As I have often proved with rod and line  
 From boyhood up, blest days of pins and twine !  
 How many an afternoon have our hushed feet  
 Crept through the alders where the waters meet,  
 Mary's and mine, and our eyes viewed the pools  
 Where the trout lay, poor unsuspecting fools,  
 And our hands framed their doom,—while over-  
                   head

His orchestra of birds the blackbird led.  
 In those lost days, no angler of them all  
 Could boast our cunning with the bait let fall,  
 Close to their snouts, from some deceiving coigne,  
 Or mark more notches when we stopped to join  
 Our fishes head to tail and lay them out  
 Upon the grass, and count our yards of trout.  
 'Twas best in June, with the brook growing clear  
 After a shower as now. In dark weather  
 It was less certain angling, for the stream  
 Was truly "sullen" then, so deep and dim.



'Tis thus in mountain lakes, as some relate,  
Where the fish need the sun to see the bait.  
The fly takes nothing in these tangled brooks,  
But grief to fishermen and loss of hooks ;  
And all our angling was of godless sort,  
With living worm,—and yet we loved the sport.

But wait. This path will lead us to the gill,  
Where you shall see the Mole in her first rill,  
E'er yet she leaves the Forest, and her bed  
Is still of iron stone, which stains her red,  
Yet keeps her pure and lends a pleasant taste  
To her young waters as they bubble past.  
You hear her lapping round the barren flanks  
Of these old heaps we call the "Cinder-banks,"  
Where our forefathers forged their iron ore,  
When Paul's was building. Now, the rabbits  
bore

In the still nights, beneath these ancient heaps,  
A very honeycomb. See, where she peeps,  
The infant river. You could hardly wet

Your ankles in her midmost eddy yet.  
 She has a pretty cunning in her look  
 Mixed with alarm, as in her secret nook  
 We find her out, half fugitive, half brave,  
 A look that all the Forest creatures have.  
 Let us away. Perhaps her guilelessness  
 Is troubled at a guilty human face,  
 (Mine, Prudence,—not your own).

I know a dell

Knee deep in fern, hard by, the very cell  
 For an elf hermit. Here stag-mosses grow,  
 Thick as a coverlet, and fox-gloves blow  
 Purple and white, and the wild columbine,  
 And here in May there springs that thing divine,  
 The lily of the valley, only here  
 Found in the Forest, blossoming year on year ;  
 A place o'ershadowed by a low-crowned oak.  
 The enchanted princess never had been woke  
 If she had gone to sleep in such a spot,  
 In spite of fortune. Why, a corpse forgot


Might lie, with eyes appealing to the sky,  
Unburied here for half a century.  
And this the woodcocks, as I take it, knew,  
Who stayed to breed here all the summer through,  
When other birds were gone. I flushed a pair  
On the longest day last year—the nest was there—  
And found some egg-shells chipped among the  
moss;

The sight is rarer now than once it was.

\* \* \* \* \*

There : we have gathered breath and climbed the  
hill,

And now can view the landscape more at will.  
This is the Pilgrim road, a well-known track,  
When folk did all their travelling on horseback,  
Now long deserted, yet a right of way,  
And marked on all our maps with due display.  
Beneath this yew tree, which perhaps has seen  
Our fathers riding to St. Thomas' shrine,  
(For this was once the way of pilgrimage  
From the south-west for all who would engage



Their vows at Canterbury), we will sit,  
 As doubtless they too sat, and rest a bit.  
 I love this solitude of birch and fern,  
 These quags and mosses, and I love the stern  
 Black yew trees and the hoary pastures bare,  
 Or tufted with long growths of withered hair  
 And rank marsh grass. I love the bell-heath's  
     bloom,  
 And the wild wealth which passionate earth's  
     womb  
 Throws in the Forest's lap to clothe unseen  
 Its ancient barrenness with youth and green.  
 I love the Forest ; 'tis but this one strip  
 Along the watershed that still dares keep  
 Its title to such name. Yet once wide grown  
 A mighty woodland stretched from Down to Down,  
 The last stronghold and desperate standing-place  
 Of that indigenous Britannic race  
 Which fell before the English. It was called  
 By Rome "Anderida," in Saxon "Weald."  
 Time and decay, and man's relentless mood,

Have long made havock of the lower wood  
With axe and plough ;—and now, of all the plain,  
These breadths of higher ground alone remain,  
In token of its presence. Who shall tell  
How long, in these lost wilds of brake and fell,  
Or in the tangled groves of oak below,  
Gathering his sacred leaf, the mistletoe,  
Some Druid priest, forgotten and in need,  
May here have kept his rite and owned his creed  
After the rest ? For hardly yet less rude,  
Have later dwelt that patron of our wood,  
The Christian Hermit Leonard, he who slew  
The last authentic dragon England knew ;  
A man of prayer and penitential vows,  
Whose tale survives in many a forest house.  
For, having slain his monster, he was given  
To choose whate'er he would in gift from heaven,  
And took for his sole recompense this thing :  
“ Snakes should not bite, nor nightingales should  
sing  
Within the Forest precincts.” Thus, thought he,

His orisons should unmolested be  
By mundane joys and troubles.

\* \* \* \* \*

Yonder ridge

Cutting the sky-line at the horizon's edge,  
Is the Surrey Hills. Beneath the chalk pit, set  
Like a white cloud upon the face of it,  
Lies Dorking, famed for fowls,—and, further still,  
Wotton and Shere ; in front you have Leith Hill,  
Which looks upon St. Paul's and on the sea,  
A point of note in our geography.  
All this is Evelyn's land, who long ago  
Left us his record of the vale below  
And wrote the "Silva,"—now to hands as good  
Passed, the descendant's of his name and blood,  
That doughty squire's, who lately stood in fight  
With the new dragons of the Primrose rite,  
And broke a lance for Ireland and the cause  
Of freedom, flouted by coercion laws.  
Strange change ! For long in history these same  
hills

Were held as ominous of lowland ills,  
A source of robber fear, in foul repute,  
And natural fortress since the days of Knute,  
And earlier still when Saxon Sussex stood  
A home-ruled kingdom of primæval wood.  
A camp, an eagle's nest, a foot set down  
Into the Weald, and evil of renown  
With the free dwellers of the plain, who saw  
A menace brooding of imperial law.  
Saxon or Dane or Norman, each in turn,  
Set there his camp to pillage and to burn ;  
For history, just as now, was mainly then  
A tale of wars 'twixt regiments and men.  
We, forest dwellers, show with honest boast  
Our Slaughter Bridge, where the Norse horde  
    was lost,  
Drowned in the red Mole waters, when the Dane  
Fled from his eerie, nor returned again.

The farthest point of all, and looking west,  
Is the line of Hindhead, on whose triple crest,

With a good glass, a three inch telescope,  
 You might make out the cross upon the top :  
 It used to be a gibbet. As a child  
 What tales I treasured of that headland wild,  
 With its three murderers, who in chains there  
     hung,  
 Rocked by the winds and tempest-tossed and  
     swung !  
 Three Portsmouth sailors were they who their  
     mate  
 Murdered for gold, and grog which guineas get,  
 And in the "Punch Bowl" made their brute  
     carouse,  
 Leaving him dead, in a lone public house,  
 Where retribution seized them as was due,—  
 For in that age of simple faiths and true,  
 Murder did always out,—and so apace  
 Brought them to justice in that self-same place ;  
 And many years they hung. At last its sway  
 Humanity, that child of yesterday,  
 Asserted in their case, and craved their bones



For Christian sepulture and these trim stones.  
I half regret the leniency thus lent :  
Their gallows tree was their best monument ;  
But ours is a trim age.

There, farther down,  
Is a tower, or "folly," built of late by one  
We call in these parts "Chevalier de Malt,"  
(The brewers love high places, and no fault).  
Behind us the chief ridge—and, as I speak,  
Out of its bowels, with an angry shriek,  
And rushing down the valley at our feet,  
The train has found us out in our retreat.  
It came from Balcombe tunnel and is bound  
To be in London e'er an hour is round.  
It scarcely scares our solitude away ;  
And yonder Royston crows, the black and grey,  
Sit on unmoved upon their oak. This ridge  
Is only thirty miles from London Bridge,  
And, when the wind blows north, the London  
smoke

Comes down upon us, and the grey crows croak,  
 For the great city seems to reach about  
 With its dark arms, and grip them by the throat.  
 Time yet may prove them right. The wilderness  
 May be disforested, and Nature's face  
 Stamped out of beauty by the heel of Man,  
 Who has no room for beauty in his plan.

Such things may be, for things as strange have  
 been.

This very place, where peace and sylvan green  
 And immemorial silence and the mood  
 Of solemn Nature, virgin and unwooded,  
 Seem as a heritage,—this very place  
 Was once the workshop of a busy race  
 Which dug and toiled and sweated. Here once  
 stood,  
 Amid the blackened limbs of tortured wood,  
 And belching smoke and fury from its mouth,  
 A monstrous furnace, to whose jaws uncouth  
 A race as monstrous offered night and day

The Forest's fairest offspring for a prey.  
Here stood a hamlet, black and populous,  
With human sins and sorrows in each house,  
A mining centre. Which of us could guess  
Each yew tree yonder marks a dwelling-place  
Of living men and women?—nay, a tomb?  
Of all the secrets hidden in Earth's womb,  
None surely is more pitiful and strange  
Than this of human death and human change  
Amid the eternal greenness of the Spring.  
All we may guess of what the years shall bring,  
Is this : that about April every year,  
White blossoms shall burst forth upon the pear  
And pink upon the apple. Nothing else.  
Earth has a silent mockery which repels  
Our questioning. Her history is not ours,  
And overlays it with a growth of flowers.

Ah, Prudence, you who wonder, being town bred,  
What troubles grieve us in the lives we lead,  
What cause we have for sorrow in these fields

Whose beauty girds us with its thousand shields,—  
 This is our tragedy. You cannot know,  
 In your bald cities, where no cowslips blow,  
 How dear life is to us. The tramp of feet  
 Brushes all older footsteps from the street,  
 And you see nothing of the graves you tread.  
 With us they are still present, the poor dead,  
 And plead with us each day of life, and cry  
 “Did I not love my life, I too, even I?”  
 You wonder!—Wonder rather we are not  
 All touched with madness and disease of thought,  
 Being so near the places where they sleep  
 Who sowed these fields we in their absence reap.  
 It were more logical. And here in truth  
 No few of our Weald peasants in their youth  
 Lose their weak wits, or in their age go mad,  
 Brooding on sights the world had deemed most  
     glad.  
 I have seen many such. The Hammer Ponds,  
 So frequent in the Forest’s outer bounds,  
 Have all their histories of despairing souls

Brought to their depths to find their true life's  
goals.

You see one in the hollow, where the light  
Touches its blackness with a gleam of white,  
Deep down, and over-browed with sombre trees  
Shutting its surface primly from the breeze,  
The landscapes' innocent eye, set open wide  
To watch the heavens,—yet with homicide  
Steeped to the lids. 'Tis scarce a year ago  
The latest sufferer from our rural woe  
Found there his exit from a life too weak  
To shield him from despairs he dared not speak.  
A curious lad. I knew young Marden well,  
Brought up, a farmer's son, at the plough's tail,  
And used for all romance to mind the crows  
At plain day-wages in his father's house.  
A "natural" he, and weak in intellect,  
His fellows said, nor lightly to be pricked  
To industry at any useful trade.  
His wits would go wool-gathering in the shade  
At harvest time, when all had work on hand,

Nor, when you spoke, would seem to understand.  
 At times his choice would be for days together  
 To leave his work and idle in the heather,  
 Making his bed where shelter could be found  
 Under the fern-stacks or on open ground,  
 Or oftenest in the charcoal burners' hives,  
 When he could win that pity from their wives.  
 Poor soul ! He needed pity for his face,  
 Scarred by a burn, and reft of human grace,  
 And for his speech which faltering in his head  
 Made a weak babble of the words he said.  
 His eyes too—what a monster's ! Did you ever  
 Watch a toad's face at evening by a river  
 And note the concentrated light which lies  
 In the twin topazes men call his eyes ?  
 Like these were Marden's. From the square of  
     clay  
 Which was his face, these windows of his day  
 Looked out in splendour, but with a fixed stare  
 Which made men start who missed the meaning  
     there.

Yet he had thoughts. Not seldom he and I  
Made in these woods discourse of forestry,  
Walking together, I with dog and gun,  
He as a beater, or, if game was none,  
Marking the timber trees and underwoods.  
He knew each teller in these solitudes,  
And loved them with a quite unreasoned art,  
Learned from no teacher but his own wild heart.  
Of trees he quaintly talked in measured saws  
Which seemed the decalogue of Nature's laws,  
Its burden being as erst, "Thou shalt not kill"  
Things made by God, which shall outlive thee  
still.

For larch and fir, new comers from the North,  
He pleaded scantily when their doom went forth,  
Knowing they needs must die, and the birch  
stems,

Since Spring renews them, yet with stratagems  
Framed to delay the moment of their fate.  
For beech he battled with more keen debate  
Of hand and eye, in deprecating tone,

Holding their rights coeval with our own.  
 But when we came to oak, good Sussex oak,  
 The flame burst forth, and all his being spoke  
 In words that jostled in his throat with tears,  
 "An oak which might outlive a thousand years."  
 He held this sacrilege. Perhaps some strains  
 Of Druid blood were mingled in his veins,  
 Which gave authority to guard the tree  
 Sacred of yore, and thus he vanquished me.

How came he to his end, poor Marden? Well,  
 All stories have their reason, as some tell,  
 In Eves that give the fruit for which men grieve,  
 Or, what is often worse, refuse to give.  
 This last was Marden's unprotected case,  
 Whose virtue failed him, and his ugliness,  
 To escape the common fate of all mankind.  
 He fell in love egregious and purblind,  
 Just like the wisest. She who caused his flame  
 Was not, I think, in honesty to blame  
 If she was less than serious at his suit.



Marden, as lover, was grotesquely mute,  
And his strange eyes were not the orbs to move  
A maiden's fancy to a dream of love.  
In truth they were scarce human. Still 'twas hard  
His passion should be met, for sole reward,  
With sermon phrases and such gospel talk  
As preachers-license for a Sunday walk,  
Mixed with her laughter. This was all she gave,  
An endless course of things beyond the grave,  
Till he lost reckoning and, poor witless man,  
Began to reason on the cosmic plan,  
Which meted this scant mercy in his case,  
And placed him in such straits for happiness.  
Can you not see it? All our rustics live  
In their small round of thoughts as in a hive,  
Each cell they build resembling each each day,  
Till their wits swarm, and then they are away.  
Marden went mad, misled by his queen bee,  
Through a deep slough of black theology,  
Which ended in destruction and this pool,  
With hell beyond him for his poor dumb soul.

He sought her final pity for love lost.  
 She talked of heaven, and sent him tracts by post.  
 He pleaded. She reproved. She prayed. He  
 swore.

She bade him go. He went, and came no more.  
 Such was the history, no whit uncommon.  
 I neither blame the boy nor blame the woman,  
 Only the hardness of a fate which laid  
 Its iron flail upon too weak a head.  
 She watched him go, half doubting what would  
 come,

Her last tract crushed betwixt his angry thumb  
 And his clenched fingers, and his lips grown  
 white,  
 And his eyes gleaming with their maniac light,  
 And so towards the hill.


That afternoon,  
 The last of a late autumn, saw the sun  
 Set in unusual splendour, (it is said  
 A disc of gold in a whole heaven of red),

The herald of a frost, the earliest  
Known for a lifetime. There, for summer dressed,  
The trees stood stiff and frozen in their green,  
Belated revellers in some changing scene  
Of sudden winter, and June left behind.  
In all the forest was no breath of wind  
For a full fortnight, nor was a leaf shed  
Long after Nature in her shroud lay dead,  
A beautiful black frost which held the land  
In unseen fetters, but with iron hand.  
The pools were frozen over in the night,  
Without a flaw or ripple ; and their light  
Reflected every stem of every tree  
In perfect mirrors of transparency.  
Boys, who a week before were in the field  
With bat and ball, now ventured, iron-heeled,  
On the ice, skating, yet awhile in fear,  
Seeing no footing on the water there.  
And thus it fell about the corpse was found—  
You will have guessed it—in the ice fast bound.  
Two boys, the brothers of the girl he wooed,

Tired of their pastime stopped awhile and stood  
 Over a shallow place where rushes grow,  
 And peering down saw a man's face below  
 Watching their own ;—his eyes were open laid,  
 Fixed in that terrible stare poor Marden's had—  
 And thought they saw a vision. Running back,  
 Loud in their fear, with spectres on their track,  
 They spread the news through all the frightened  
     farms,  
 Filling the cottagers with wild alarms,  
 Till some made bold with spades, and hewed  
     away  
 The ice above to where the dead man lay.  
 There, sure enough, was Marden, his fool's mouth  
 Stuffed for all solace of his sad soul's drouth  
 With the girl's tracts. Thus primed, he had  
     plunged in  
 And ended all, with a last deed of sin,  
 Grotesque and tragic as his life. No less  
 Let us persuaded be he rests in peace,  
 Or where were heaven's justice?

One last tale,

As we walk back,—of worthy Master Gale,  
Our house's founder, who in a dark age  
Won us the lands we hold in heritage,  
Working his forge here in the civil wars,  
And welding fortunes out of iron bars.  
A story with a moral too, at least,  
For money makers, of how wealth increased,  
And most of all for us, to whom his toil  
Has proved a mine of ease and endless spoil,  
Though of a truth we are unlineal heirs,  
Not true descendants of his toils and cares.  
His history stands recorded in a book  
Himself achieved, e'er Death his anvil broke,  
A volume full of wisdom and God's praise,  
Trust in himself, and scorn of human ways.  
He was a blacksmith, born at Sevenoke  
In Kent, the toilsome son of toilsome folk,  
And honourable too, as honour then  
Was understood among commercial men.  
He paid his way through life. He owed to none



Beyond their will to let the debt run on,  
 Nor trusted any farther than he need.  
 He held the race of man a bastard breed,  
 An evil generation, bred of dust,  
 And prone to spending, idleness and lust.  
 God was his friend. Of Him he counsel took,  
 How he should make new ventures with new luck,  
 Praying each night continuance of health,  
 Increase of wisdom and increase of wealth ;  
 Nor ever in his yearly balance sheet  
 Forgot to inscribe himself in heaven's debt.  
 A virtuous man, and holding with good cause  
 The eternal justice of the social laws  
 Which give to industry its well-earned meed,  
 And leave the weak and idle to their need.  
 From childhood up, he clutched the staff of life,  
 As if it were a cudgel for the strife,  
 And wielded it throughout relentlessly.  
 His parents, brothers, all by God's decree,  
 Died of the plague when he was scarce sixteen.  
 The date, as I have reckoned, should have been

The very year the patriots raised their backs  
To the new pressure of the shipping tax.  
His first fight was a battle for the pence  
Left by his father, when, at dire expense  
Of lawyer's fees and charges without end,  
He found himself with fifty pounds to spend,  
And a small stock-in-trade of iron sows,  
A fireless smithy and an empty house.  
With these and God's compassion, and a man  
To strike and blow for him, his trade began,  
Till in four years his industry had grown  
To a fair substance in his native town.

When he was twenty-one, an accident  
Brought him to Sussex ; and, as Saul was sent  
To find his father's asses and therewith  
Met with a kingdom, so this honest smith,  
While chasing a bad debtor through the Weald,  
Lit of his fortune in this very field.  
For, failing of his money, in its stead  
He took his debtor's forge and smelting shed ;

Sold his goodwill at Sevenoke, and set  
 His smithy in the Forest next to it.  
 This brought him trade. The civil wars began  
 And each man's hand was set against each man,  
 And sword to sword. But, while his neighbours  
     fought,  
 Gale like a Gallio cared for these things nought,  
 And sold his iron with indifferent zeal  
 To kings and Parliaments in need of steel ;  
 Or, if a prejudice his thought divides,  
 It is for Cromwell and his Ironsides.  
 But God's be all the glory, His alone  
 Who to His servant Gale such grace had shown !

Thus in an iron age this thrifty man  
 Got gold and silver, and, while others ran  
 Out of their fortunes, he with pockets full  
 Bought up their lands and held the world a fool.  
 'Tis now two hundred years since Father Gale  
 Laid down his pick and hammer. He had won  
 By forty years of toil beneath the sun



The right to work no longer, for himself  
And for his heirs for ever. This is Wealth !  
He was a prudent buyer, and died possessed  
Of some four thousand acres of the best  
Land in the parish. His first purchases  
Were in Worth Forest, to his vulgar eyes  
I fear mere wood for burning. Pease pottage  
And Frog's hole farms came next ; and in his age,  
Wishing, as he says, to have a good estate . . .  
And house to live in, though the day was late  
To think of building, and he most abhorred  
To waste his substance upon brick and board,  
Holding with prudent minds that such intent  
Is but at best a "sweet impoverishment"  
And that the wise man doth more soundly hit  
Who turns another's folly to his wit,  
He purchased Caxtons, manor and domain,  
To be the home of a new race of men.

His last words, as recorded by his son,  
A man of taste and letters and who won

A seat in Parliament in William's reign,  
 Were uttered in the ancient Biblic strain  
 Dear to the age he lived in and to him.  
 They might be David's in their cadence grim.  
 "When I am dead and gone," he said, "my son,  
 Trust in the Lord and in none other, none.  
 Be wary of thy neighbours. They are vile,  
 A brood of vipers, to oppose whose guile  
 I have been at constant charges all my life,  
 Take thee an honest woman for thy wife,  
 And get thee sons who shall inherit all  
 Thy God hath given thee, spite of Adam's fall.  
 Guard well thy rights, and cease not to pull down  
 All gates that block thy highway to the town,  
 Such as that man of Belial, Jacob Sears,  
 Has set in Crawley Lane these thirty years.  
 Let no man venture to enclose the wastes.  
 Be on thy guard against such ribald priests  
 As Lee and Troughton. They are an ill brood,  
 A bastard generation, bone and blood.  
 Hold fast to thy religion. Go not thou

After lewd women and the worldly show  
Of rich apparel. Keep thy substance close  
In thy own chamber for the fear of loss,  
And thy own counsel closer, lest men find  
Their way to rob thee of thy peace of mind.  
But, more than all, be quit of vain pretence,  
And see thy income equal thy expense,  
So shalt thou have thy God with thee alway."

Thus runs the story. You have seen to-day  
The latest shoot of his posterity,  
The boy we left there sleeping. His shall be  
One day the guardianship of this domain,  
As other Gales have held it. It were vain  
In me to speak of all the goodly fruit  
Begotten on the stem of this old root,  
This sour crab-apple, worthy master Gale.  
This child perhaps . . . But that will be a  
tale  
For new historians.

Listen ! Did you hear

Just now, down in the valley, someone cheer

Or hail us ? Stop. Ay, there there comes a man,

Running and shouting loud as a man can.

He sees us too, and slowly through the fern

Now climbs to meet us. Something we shall  
learn

Without a doubt. God grant it be not ill !

And yet he seems to falter and stand still.

What is your message, Penfold ? Why this haste ?

A little closer. Speak, man ! Here at last

You have found us. Come. What is it that you  
said ?

See, we have courage.

“ Sir, the child is dead ! ”

## "SED NOS QUI VIVIMUS."

### I.

How beautiful is life—the physical joy of sense  
and breathing ;

The glory of the world which has found speech  
and speaks to us ;

The robe which summer throws in June round the  
white bones of winter ;

The new birth of each day, itself a life, a world,  
a sun !

### II.

I love all things that are young and happy and  
eternal,

Eternal in their change and growth as I too  
changing grow.

Old am I, and how many voices that I loved are  
heard not !

Yet the world lives, and in its life I live and  
laugh and love.

III.

I woke to-day at daybreak, thrilled with a new  
sense of pleasure near me,  
Because a bird sang at my window and had  
ceased, afraid.  
Awhile I lay and listened conscious only of my  
being,  
The same fool school-boy as in days gone by,  
nerve, sinew, vein.

IV.

Who tells us we are changed, that we with our  
wise years grow older?  
I am a poet,—may be patriot, soldier, statesman,  
priest.  
Yet none the less I lay to-day and watched in  
childish wonder  
The flies tie and untie their knots, a mystery  
unrevealed.

v.

The flies' way in the air perplexed me ever and  
perplexes

No less this hour than in old time—so Solomon  
the wise,

Spite of his wit, essayed in vain the riddle of the  
eagles ;

And I a child to-day lay there, a child, less than  
a child.

vi.

And I heard tones well-known and prudent words  
and phrases ventured

Gently to chide me for hours wasted thus in  
ease,

Till I too spoke and vowed aloud new ways of life  
amended,

And for the thousandth time in pain arraigned  
and blamed my dreams.

VII.

Then I rose hastily, as one who hears and fears  
reproving,  
Although, God help me, there is living none  
now dares to chide or blame,  
And I broke through the curtain of the dusk, and  
from the orient  
The sun's face through the window smiled, the  
lord of a new day.

VIII.

How dare I grieve in the fair presence of the lord  
of morning?  
How dare I not rejoice who thus its king in  
Eden reign?  
God's peace is on this place proclaimed, and named,  
and promised,  
A sentient joy of living things which fills and  
thrills the earth.



IX.

Here all things joyous are. Birds breed in sedge  
and thicket ;  
Hares feed in pairs, and squirrels leap from spray  
to spray ;  
Dead limbs of elms make nests for the wood-  
peckers ;  
The coots' cry from the mere comes loud and  
tells of rain.

X.

Naught here may harm or hurt. This is a  
sanctuary  
For the world's weak, hedged in with love and  
fenced and sealed—  
Man its sole outcast, the earth's mad disturber  
branded  
Still with the mark of Cain and death from  
which life flees.

XI.

Thus musing in my pride, and shame too somewhat,  
I descended,

Led by invisible hands towards the trees and  
fields below.

Along these self-same paths my childhood ran  
exulting,

Following the poor lost dead who loved them  
as I love.

XII.

What was their pride then in their leafy fair  
possession,

Theirs in their day, who planned these glades  
and thickets round !

How has their presence vanished from the silent  
pastures,

The poor lost dead who held my hand and  
loved them as I love !

XIII.

Yet not to mourn I came. No day of joy destroyed deserves our anguish.

Pleasure's whole soul is this, to feel the living stream which flows.

That which they did I do. In me they live unvanquished.

My voice is theirs to-day, my step their step, my soul their soul.

XIV.

For them I live ungrieving, and ungrieved their fruit I gather

From trees they planted bravely in their pride of life and time.

They fashioned these old gardens. Let my soul their joy inherit,

Their passion heaped on passion, life on life, for my life's prize.

XV.

Who were they all? Some names they bore well-  
known, some others fameless.

A box of parchments yellow lies in the dull  
dust of age ;

A few poor letters, written by fond hands to  
fonder faces ;

Through all the passionate love of home, this  
home of mine, once theirs.

XVI.

The primæval tiller of the soil enjoyed, the soil  
ancestral—

Whence came he? What his lineage? Nay, 'tis  
hidden. Some have told

Tales of high daring done, lands won, through  
lines remote descending

From old Norse sources and the potent loins of  
kings and gods ;

XVII.

Or, with less pomp, of armoured knights, when  
    knights were held heroic,  
    Of prudent counsellors and priests and men  
    revered for law,  
Dim-featured ghosts of vanished names set in for-  
    gotten story,  
    Pleading for memory still of their last son through  
    years of change.

XVIII.

And yet I know not. Truth and fable here are  
    strangely blended.  
    Nay, rather let me set before my face in fancy  
    one  
Like to myself, a clod of Sussex earth more kindly  
    kneaded,  
    And mostly noble through the love of right the  
    sense of wrong.

XIX.

I see him stand beneath these pollard oaks, the  
same, hard-handed,  
With hook, and axe, and bill, a wrestler with  
the forest's green,  
A man grave-featured, dull of thought and wit,  
slow-paced, unyielding,  
Stern in his toil and niggard still of smile and  
sign and speech.

XX.

The woodland round him a vast sea was then,  
whose scattered islands  
Were these few acres conquered hardly by men  
whole of heart,  
Spite of the demons and wild spectral elves that  
held the forest  
And deadly dragons haunting still in guile the  
undrained morass.

XXI.

Who knows? a servant he, may be, of our good  
saint and patron,  
The cloistered friar, who for his life-long penance  
vowed and done,  
And for some monsters slain, had claimed in sole  
reward and guerdon  
The wood birds' silence round him while he  
made his prayer at noon.

XXII.

How have the birds grown jubilant once more in  
song and Godless,  
In these unchastened days when men have ceased  
to kneel or pray !  
This peasant knelt in faith. The world to him  
had nothing joyous.  
Death, like a spectre, dogged him close with fears  
of heaven and hell.

XXIII.

And yet he loved these lands. Here haply a  
strange breadth of freedom  
Was from all lords and kings by reason of the  
forest fear.  
What warrior dared to search these "antres vast and  
desarts idle"  
For such poor scattered few freeholders as its  
fastness held ?

XXIV.

The Roman, Dane and Norman from the Down,  
their distant eerie,  
Looked forth, but only looked. The swamps  
of trackless mire  
Clogged all their chariot wheels who dared by  
force of arms to venture  
With horse and spear and rider through these  
perilous bogs accursed.



XXV.

And thus he lived and died, unknown to all, un-  
tamed, unlorded,  
This silent first forefather of the paternal woods  
reclaimed,  
Holding his place beneath the sun with sullen  
desperate caution  
On the square plot of up-turned acres that his  
spade had made.

XXVI.

Lives there in me his son still something of his  
hardy sinew,  
Something of his heroic soul? Still darkly arched  
o'erhead  
The forest speaks to me, its child. I hoard and  
count and reckon  
As my birth's right and prize these lands and  
look askance at men.

XXVII.

Deep in my soul he lies. Nor less the rest, the  
the crew penurious  
Of careful tillers, holding gold achieved more  
dear than ease,  
The covetous of farms, still grimly set through  
generations  
To add their store of value won to the ancestral  
fields.

XXVIII.

The wealth they made that day is mine, the glades  
reclaimed, the hamlets,  
The treasure of the earth deep delved in reigns  
Plantagenet,  
The store of iron ore heaped high for needs of  
civil battle,  
When men in armour trod the flying heels of  
armed men.

XXIX.

Some gathered fortune boldly daring.    Truce then  
to the forest.

Some spent their store in lordly wassail, brawl-  
ing and lewd wine.

What anger was twixt neighbours there, twixt sire  
and son what contest !

What bonds usurious countersigned enriched the  
hands of guile !

XXX.

Still in their stubbornness of blood they stood, these  
my own fathers,

Through whom the thread of life, a feeble cord  
by fortune spun

And loosed upon Time's tempest, to their latest  
born descended,

And with the life the lands redeemed which thus  
unshorn he loves.

XXXI.

Justice, and squire, and clerk, and graduate of  
humaner letters !

Here history spreads her written page for certain  
truth to record.

On these green lawns rose novel shapes, trim walks  
and classic gardens,

Decked with Italian forms in stone of nymph  
and faun and god.

XXXII.

Thus was I born. And lo, their golden leaves re-  
newed each summer

The oak trees weave for me as them, sublimely,  
blindly dumb,

Holding their secrets closely shut, nor even to my  
cunning

Yielding a word but this, alas for thee ! and woe  
for man !

XXXIII.

Woe for his valour, woe for thine ! Time still shall  
all things vanquish,  
Folly and virtue, lusts of youth, mad griefs, sub-  
lime designs,  
The courage of high manhood feebly striving and  
then failing.  
Yonder behold the churchyard is, heaped high  
with thy own kind.

XXXIV.

Here I broke off, in sudden exclamation loud dis-  
claiming  
This new insistence of my foolish soul's disease  
of grief.  
The day's work calls me, to my soul I said, a day  
of labour,  
Or only laboured idleness yet clear at least of  
tears.

XXXV.

Therewith I turned the latch before me of the low  
cow's-stable,  
Where, with her udders full and lowing loud to  
hear me near,  
Stood my cow Myrtle, large eyed, moon faced,  
brindle-hided, patient,  
Waiting my footstep on the path which every  
morn she hears.

XXXVI.

What does she meditate on all things, brute,  
divine and human,  
This mild-eyed mother? She too loves the knee-  
deep fields she knows  
With the same reasonless desire and natural greed  
of longing,  
And this between us hidden deep is a strong  
bond of love.

XXXVII.

Her pulses can beat wildly too with rage and  
subtle passion

When from her herd she strays. And once each  
Spring, with fortune cloyed,

For a brief month she knows all heaven's love and  
rapturous pleasure,

Fondling the thing new born, which is her own,  
her soul, her joy.

XXXVIII.

I love to touch the links of life between us, the  
blind kindness

Of joy unreasoned, solace in the sun, in shade  
delight.

The unhuman part of Man is still the best, his love  
of children,

His love of meads and vales at home, his fond-  
ness for his kind.

XXXIX.

Let me extenuate naught in thought, nor set down  
aught in malice.

Here, Myrtle, is that thing thou lovest best, thy  
feed of corn.

Give me in turn thy peace of soul, peace passing  
understanding,

Thy trust each vain sweet day renewed sublime  
in Man thy god.

\* \* \* \* \*

XL.

How beautiful is life, the conscious power of  
thought in action,

The brain's imperious will commanding fate  
within its sphere !

Around it the world's forces, prisoned Jinns, obey  
the magician,

Tamed and constrained for his delight their  
allotted tasks to weave.



XLI.

And what were life unlabouring, life even here in  
this dear Eden,  
Were there no toil? Eternal perfectness in idle  
round  
Is God's sole lot to taste, not ours whom rage of  
hope possesses  
And Time disturbs with tales of change, and  
dark oblivion goads.

XLII.

Our actions are our monument. The prince in  
slaughtered thousands  
Carves his red name on fields of war that he may  
sounder sleep.  
The Statesman fashions high his sluggard pride to  
patriot glories  
That he may lie entombed with kings while  
kings and kingdoms grieve.

XLIII.

The prophet as of old speaks, " Rise, ye mourners,  
from your bondage,  
Get ye from hence and flee away afar lest evil  
come ;  
Behold, the Lord shall lead you forth through  
deserts to new pastures,  
Thus shall ye do, and thus," and he too sleeps  
his sleep with God.

XLIV.

Nor less the poet. Chosen to sing of an Eternal  
beauty,  
Dares he be silent in his day and leave his tale  
untold ?  
How shall he wait on, idly, he a hireling without  
wages,  
Lest in the night untried of toil he wake and cry  
aloud ?

XLV.

There is a record given him he must needs :  
deeds accomplish,  
A tale of transient things his eyes have seen, h  
ears have heard ;  
And he a traitor were if dying dumb they too shou  
vanish,  
And fill the forgotten lapses lost of the unnun  
bered years ;

XLVI.

Memories of times departed, each hour filled  
the brim with promise ;  
Voices how sweet of human souls whose drea  
are with them laid ;  
Echoes of laughters fraught with tears since joy h  
turned to sorrow ;  
Footsteps of dancing feet long gone to rest whe  
grasses wave ;

XLVII.

Tender, sad vows of women, how passionately  
appealing  
To eyes they loved, nor deeming day nor night  
itself too long  
For their blest service, 'sieging heaven amain in vain  
for pity,  
And holding earth and fate too strait for their  
wide arms of love ;

XLVIII.

Manly ambitions, vast as the high arch unspanned  
of heaven ;  
Schemes of impossible good for Man, made  
naught by human fraud ;  
Follies of valiant hearts cast forth upon the die of  
battle ;  
Hopes of a world destroyed, made void through  
human greed of gold.

XLIX.

I too have dreamed a dream which I would fain  
    essay to interpret,  
    A dream of infinite love, which, if my hour of  
    wit were proved,  
Should stand my message to the world, a voice of  
    power for ever,  
    Binding the generations new to the past ages  
    dumb.

L.

How should I speak it best, in what high tones of  
    full-voiced reason  
    Holding the souls of all? No idle lapse of empty  
    sounds  
Should cloy the hearing of the earth grown deaf to  
    alien passion,  
    No clamour of vain sobs, no throbs, no formless  
    dirge of words.

LI.

But the true sculpture of a thought, clean cut and  
plain of meaning,  
Marble made life, with sinewy phrase and  
knotted argument,  
And that deep-throated resonant voice which in  
the morn of Egypt  
Spoke through her Memnon's lips to all, and all  
a nation heard.

LII.

This should be prophecy—nay, judgment. But  
with less, if granted,  
Well were I winged for song, and luminous so  
in thought should move  
With the world's teachers, bards whose chosen  
strings have nobly chaunted  
Hymns of heroic heaven or only this of human  
love.

LIII.

Only that tragedy of hope, which in its full expansion

Has never yet been told, the history of a human soul

From its first outlook with blank eyes upon a world of shadows

To its last blank farewell in tears upon a world of scorn ;

LIV.

The very truth of childhood, with its fears and tribulations,

Hushed into sudden smiles and sleep by what unreasoning change ;

The wherefore and the why of its first bursts of causeless laughter ;

The meaning of its griefs untold, the sense of its first pain ;

LV.

And boyhood's early trust, thrust forth to the chill  
winds of schooling,  
Learning the bitterness of life through divers  
ways of loss,  
Wasting the freshness of its joys on noise, its first  
compassion  
On its own wounded back, till, turning, it too  
grasps the rod ;

LVI.

And youth's high hope, with painted dreams of all  
potential pleasure,  
Doubting which way to spring, the paths of  
honour leading here,  
There of delight, each robed with morning's virginal  
new vesture  
And beautiful with tears of love, though who  
should call them tears ?



LVII.

And manhood with its wars; and middle life :  
 yet unvanquished,  
 When strength is tried and, having learnèd  
 through grief the nobler roads  
 Of the world's glory, he beholds life-settled pu-  
 pose, standing  
 Calm with his fate, and seems to touch at la-  
 the ulterior goal ;

LVIII.

And then the pang which strikes, and the swi-  
 end. All these, in sequence,  
 Would I set forth in words, tragic, severe, an-  
 each should breathe  
 Of a new beauty, shade and light, blue skie  
 white clouds and tempests,  
 Mountain and vale and plain and stream, and  
 circling all, Death's sea.

\* \* \* \* \*

LIX.

How beautiful is life ! The present sense of souls  
that love us ;  
The enfolding spirit of love, made known in  
divers silent ways ;  
The wife, the child, the man and maid, whose  
zeal and faith enthrone us  
High in their temple niche enshrined ! Thus  
angels serving stand.

LX.

What need we of more love, of larger fields re-  
vealed of conquest,  
Who all things have that heaven itself in its re-  
ward might deal ?  
What need we of new life, who touch the goal  
supreme of fortune,  
Holding to-day for prize the perfect love that  
casts out fear ?

LXI.

Come with me, child, who art myself, only a self  
grown dearer,

One that I dare to love and without shame, for  
thou art mine.

What shall our pleasure be to-day, our daily task  
being ended?

Take thou a counsel of thy joy. Be thou my  
pleasure's guide.

LXII.

Speak. Shall we make our visitation of the wood  
and forests?

The midsummer shoot is there; and in their  
nuptial robes of green

The oak trees murmur to the flies their tale of full-  
blown summer,

And, where the stems were felled in Spring, the  
foxgloves point their spears.

LXIII.

Or to the paddocks, deep in green for grazing steer  
and heifer,  
And, what we better love, those creatures of a  
nobler mould,  
Which are fair Nature's masterpiece and last  
supreme perfection,  
Mares with their unweaned foals high-souled in  
proud descent of blood.

LXIV.

Or rather—let the indulgence to our idle souls be  
granted—  
Lapped in the summer heat, without more toil  
than this of dreams,  
On the lake's bosom moored, where birch and  
alder cast their shadows,  
Sit we and woo, hours through, with rod and  
line the mistrustful bream.

LXV.

Here the boat lies, half hidden she, where three  
    weeks since we left her,  
    In her snug dog-wood nook.    The rushes round  
    have bound her in  
Already in their net.    But we will free and float  
    and set her,  
    An ark for our new fortunes launched, to bear  
    us where we will.

LXVI.

See, there she swims.    Our noise in loosing her has  
    roused a heron,  
    And with him teals and lapwings, with a cry of  
    swift alarm.  
Ah Man ! thy hated face disturbs once more thy  
    natural fellows,  
    What is thy kingship worth to thee if all things  
    fly thy hand ?

LXVII.

The evil done is done, alas ! Let us indulge our  
    laughter,  
    Dear Hester, sing to me that song the foolish  
    fishes heard  
When you deceived them to their hurt by your un-  
    real assurance  
    Telling of captive birds set free—the while the  
    nets we spread.

LXVIII.

Sing me a song, while I the happy oars in listless  
    measure  
    Ply looking at your face, and presently, when it  
    is done,  
You shall hear stories told of far-off lands and  
    strange adventures,  
    Things that your father saw e'er you to give him  
    joy were born ;

LXIX.

Tales of great mountains where he set his steps in  
early manhood,

Not hills like ours, but craggy pinnacles that  
pierce the clouds,

Abysmal valleys and white slopes of treacherous  
ice, whose foothold

Failed as in dreams men fail and fall, and urged  
him headlong down,

LXX.

Falling for ever—ever—and yet saved by inter-  
vention,

On the extreme curve's edge, of a miraculous  
softer snow,

Wherein he bedded lay with beating heart till the  
slow rescue

Gravely descending came at length, and bore him  
scatheless home ;

LXXI.

Or of the unlimited fields revealed of grey Arabian  
desert,

Where are no streams or shade, but only the  
blind haze of noon,

And the sun strikes with might, and the skins  
shrink which hold his blessing,

The dole of water spared, his forfeit life if these  
be gone.

LXXII.

Drear and untenanted. Yet see the sudden trans-  
formation

When the Spring rains have come ! In every vale  
and hollow there

Cattle unnumbered pasture knee-deep down in  
purple blossoms,

And the calf-camels prance, and their dams  
roar like souls in pain.



LXXIII.

Or of days spent alone and nights in far Brazilian  
forests,

Where sky and earth itself are lost in insolent  
depths of green.

High overhead the laden tree-tops touch the ex-  
tremest heaven,

Leading through latticed walls of flowers and  
veils deep-dripped with dew.

LXXIV.

The impenetrable shadows vast of that shut place  
of silence

How are they broken by the sheen and glint of  
insect wings,

Bright coloured lamps slow flitting ! Lo from the  
impervious thicket

A blaze of blue, a butterfly, bursts flashing  
through the trees.

LXXV.

Or last, of the vast hum of a tumultuous Indian  
city,

Where street and bridge are thronged with men  
who sell and buy and cry,

And women with bright eyes half veiled pass bear-  
ing flowers and incense,

Through the tall temple gates set wide, to gods  
in ochreous shrines.

LXXVI.

Strange wonderful and vast, till you forget the im-  
mediate beauty,

The home we love, our little raptures over joys  
well known,

This lake, these woods, this boat, the brook which  
tells of English summer

With its mad bubbles dancing and its hazel foam  
wind-borne,

LXXVII.

And all that was and is to fill our souls with their  
contentment

From dawn to dusk. And so in joy this latest  
evening ends.

God grant us length of days, of days like these to  
be remembered

Till life's last night has come and we too gathered  
are in death !—

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